

Vol. VI, No. 2

SPRING 1956

CROSSINGS

*A QUARTERLY REVIEW
to explore the implications
of Christianity for our times*

WEIGEL • HEER • LAMMING • HAMER
VERWILGHEN • GERVAIS • DE FINANCE

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CROSS CURRENTS is published quarterly by Cross Currents Corporation, a non-profit membership corporation, at 3111 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y. 2nd class mail privileges authorized at New York, N. Y. Editorial communications should be addressed to Joseph E. Cunneen, Central Ave., Demarest, N. J. CLoster 5-0366J. The price is \$1 per issue, \$3 per yearly subscription. Canada \$3.30, Foreign \$4. Subscription department, 3111 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y. UNIVERSITY 5-4480. U. S. distributor: B. de Boer, P. O. Box 102, Bloomfield, N.J. Printed in the U.S.A. by the Waldon Press, 203 Wooster St., New York 12, N. Y. Copyright 1956 by Cross Currents Corporation.

THE PERSECUTED WITNESS

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUE

IN THIS DAY of headlined visits by Communist leaders and vapid journalism on "the easing of East-West tensions," it may be particularly relevant for all of us, believers and unbelievers, to consider the fate of Christians behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains. The head-on meeting of Catholics with Communist governments in various parts of the world is the subject of the lead article in this issue. No matter how much we may yearn for a more imaginative and flexible foreign policy, no matter what cautious hopes we may entertain while hearing of Soviet criticism of Stalin and the easing of police-state regulations among the satellites, the persecution of religion under Communist regimes remains a strangely neglected reality.

Even among Christians, the subject has been tucked away and forgotten. Some of us have heard so many Communion-breakfast talks on "godless Communism" that we find it hard to suppress a yawn: we "passed this course" so many years ago. We do not seem to use the situation as a special occasion for prayer and penance, or to feel a unity with our brothers—including our "separated" brothers—who are undergoing such terrible trials. We talk of martyrs of Communist terror, but we make no effort to enter into the abyss of suffering or to understand its meaning; the torturing of a priest in China, like an outrage against Negroes in Mississippi, offers too easy a temptation to place ourselves in the role of accuser.

It is not that Communist outrages are never mentioned, although there still exist odd remnants of "advanced" thought where persecution of Christians provokes no greater concern than stale clichés about clerical reaction. Never-

theless, it may be a more serious sin against the spirit—and one against which we might more properly direct our attention—to add our own persecution to that of Communists, reducing the witness of the Christian martyr to the terms of our suburban parish. The popular press, secular and religious, is all too ready to appropriate his testimony to its own needs; sad to say, even some Christian missionaries, men who have earned our admiration and who may often possess great personal heroism, have been willing to obscure their own witness by selling the "inside story" of their prison term under Communism.

The two statements that we publish under the collective title, "The Church of Silence," would rather invite us to meditate on the situation of the Christian under Communist rule. The *variety* of the response is emphasized in the first part of the article. We are encouraged to rid ourselves of the notion that our specific Christian milieu (even if this is to mean the "Christian" West as a whole), represents the Center of Christianity, or that Christians behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains are there simply for the purpose of dying in a manner calculated to edify us.

There are situations in which to ask for complete clarity may be simply an indication of paranoia: this may be one of them. Those who have fled Communist governments speak of very real enormities to explain why it was necessary for them to leave, but it would be wrong to think of flight as a Christian requirement. On the other hand, the moving story of Father Verwilghen (the second section of our article) upsets all our categories. What are we to make of a lie which becomes a bizarre form of

sincerity? Despite his awareness that fear was the ever-present reality of Communist China, he insists, "Nevertheless, if it were to begin again, I would still lie."

It is obvious that Father Verwilghen's "lie" grew out of an heroic decision that the Christian missionary must be *present* in a Communist country. It hardly needs to be pointed out that such an undertaking involves considerable risks, risks not totally dissimilar to those encountered by the French priest-workers. One need not get to the point where Communism is identified with the Satanic to recognize that modern totalitarianism—to which our own mass communications

are dangerously related—has reached a new dimension in the refinement of torture as psychological indoctrination, especially when the new order, as in China, represents such real values as were experienced by Father Verwilghen.

The Christian witness who is persecuted under Communism is therefore apt to leave us more troubled than edified. The final voice we hear may have the metallic ring of a Communist-trial self-accusation, or as recently in the case of the Chinese Bishop of Shanghai, be that of collaborationist accusers from his own flock. These situations appear to have the same spiritual significance as that of the humiliating death of the Curé d'Ambricourt in Bernanos' *Diary of a Country Priest*. We knew that persecution was the lot of Christians, but we imagined something more glorious, that would not involve the violation of our very conscience.

If we are to think in these terms, and be prepared to live out such a situation—and is it realistic to think of the confrontation of Communism simply as a remote possibility?—we must possess a deep faith, and a profound sense of Christian obedience. The lesson pointed out by Albert Gervais, citing the heroic example of the Catholic community of

Shanghai, is the discovery of the primary realities—the Mass, the Sacraments, prayer—as a discovery in some sense made possible by the Communists, since they destroyed the many church organizations which seem to be the briars in which so much of Catholic life is choked. In this extremity we may encounter an example of that genuine obedience which is described as one always accompanied by an inner freedom and joy. This is the obedience we would need to learn under a Communist regime.

Nor is there any real possibility of avoiding something of this spiritual risk; it seems impossible for us to live up to the demand: "Let your conversation be yea, yea and nay, nay." It is not only that flight cannot be presented as a Christian requirement; it is really that there is no place to go. We may tend to feel that in America we can be secure from the attractions of Communism, but the spiritual enemy that we rightly denounce in Communism has found more patriotic forms at home. To be fully "protected," we would not only give up the search for the obedience of which Heer speaks, we would have to erect such a complete system of political, cultural and social structures in which to lead our lives that we would end by creating a counter-totalitarianism of our own.

If we accept the necessity of risk, we must have both a deep commitment and a disposition to learn from others. "Is not the whole question a matter of strengthening our faith and that of our brothers, in order to be capable of receiving all that is not absolutely incompatible with the Spirit of Jesus which lives in his Church, and to confront that which we cannot accept?"¹ For Christians in general, this means a constant striving for greater unity, and Father Hamer's article on Catholic ecumenism reflects a sympathetic concern to

increase this awareness. Appropriately enough, the issue also provides—in Father Weigel's study of Tillich—a concrete instance of a Catholic theologian making a serious attempt to understand an important Protestant theologian. In addition, there is the kind of effort revealed in the article of Father de Finance on "Being and Subjectivity," in which a distinguished contemporary Thomist makes a positive response to modern philosophical values.

Such a concern for intellectual integrity is the proper accompaniment for receiving the disturbing testimony of the present-day martyr. His witness is a crucial test for us, since it challenges us to learn more of the agony of commit-

ment and the complexity of the intentions involved in the very mission of Thomas à Becket, the paradoxes of a whisky-priest's road to salvation, or the ambiguous role of the priest who has chosen to remain behind the bamboo curtain, the spectacle of the persecuted witness should make us aware of the risk involved in the service of truth, and hesitant to effect a simple annexation of the witness to "our side."

JOSEPH E. CUNNEEN

¹ Appropriately enough, this sentence is taken from the conclusion of Fr. A. M. Henry's commentary (*LA VIE INTELLECTUELLE*, March 1956) on the article which we present first in this issue, and which prompts these introductory remarks.

THE CHURCH OF SILENCE

I. THE PROBLEM

Albert Gervais

IN TODAY'S WORLD there are numerous Catholic communities which confront Communism directly. The USSR's drive to the west has encompassed the Baltic countries, Poland, East Germany, several countries of Central Europe and the Balkan peninsula: this area includes a sizable Catholic population. This seizure by Russia has everywhere provoked severe measures against members of the Roman Church; this has been followed by spectacular arrests, such as those of Cardinal Mindzenty in Hungary, and Cardinal Wyszynski in Poland. Numerous bishops, priests and laymen have been condemned by "people's courts"; some have died in captivity, and others drag out a long Calvary in prison. In the Far East, the coming to power of Mao-Tse-Tung in China and Ho-Chi-Minh in North Viet-Nam have brought the Catholic community of China (3,500,000) behind the Iron Curtain, as well as that of North Viet-Nam (400,000), while 800,000 other Catholics have gone over to South Viet-Nam. In the East too, there have been numerous arrests of bishops, priests and laymen. Everywhere the effort is made to reduce the Church to silence.

The two articles which we present under a collective title also appeared together in LA REVUE NOUVELLE, the distinguished Belgian Catholic monthly. In a brief forward, the editors stated that the first article grew out of a series of discussions between the staff and the author; the second is the fruit of the personal experience of the author, a Belgian missionary priest now in Japan.

We of the West do not seem to be very much concerned about this tragic situation in which our brothers in Christ are involved. It is high time that we wake up.

For most of us, these Christians of the Church of silence are the condemned, dead men living under temporary reprieve. There is only one question: will they remain firm to the point of martyrdom? Since for the most part they do, their attitude becomes a powerful apologetical argument: the Church is truly divine, she will not perish, the Promise of the Holy Spirit is upon her.

The Church which will not perish, it is us... that is what many Catholics believe. The Church of silence is the Church at the frontier, and what goes on at the frontier has no direct influence on the interior of a country.

Western Catholics too often imagine that they are the Church, just as they imagine that they are the center of the world. But they are neither. If they wish to bring their stone to the building of Christ's Body, they must break this bad habit. The spirit of Christ is a catholic, a universal spirit. A world consciousness must constantly be renewed, in some sense re-created.

The world's center of gravity has moved slowly towards the Far East, precisely where there are very few Christians, and where, humanly speaking, these Christians are in a very bad position. But for God, who sees things differently than we do, it is not impossible that the situation of the Christian communities of the Far East has never been better; they prepare in tears what others will harvest in joy, a Church made young

again. In any case, the future of the Church appears to be at stake there where the Christian communities are so small, scarcely enough for the leaven in the dough.

Well then, we might say, let us run to save them, let us organize a crusade. Even supposing for the moment that such a crusade is legitimate, do you think that we will find men who will undertake such an expedition out of good will, or are we not too cowardly even for this effort? Moreover, such a crusade is not legitimate; would it not end up by being a defense of western civilization, or rather, a certain form of western civilization? By this very action, the Christian communities that we would save would cease to be the leaven in the dough. During this time, whether we like it or not, Europe will no longer be the center of the world.

In such conditions, what can be done? We of the West ought to accept that we are only one voice in a dialogue of charity—a voice, but only one voice. We are not the Church. Let us stop burdening the life of the non-western Christian communities with a heavy mortgage, by unconsciously forcing them (because we outnumber them) to get in step with us. At the same time, and especially by reason of the actual situation today, let us consider the challenge to the Church of silence as a problem, if not *the* fundamental problem of our Church.

Then we will turn our attention resolutely to these communities which are confronted by the Communist regime. We should refuse to be the dupes of infantile reports on the subject, which tend to flatter our own desires.

As soon as we give the least attention to this situation, we recognize two facts. The first is that the response of Christians to the Communist challenge is very different from one area to another. The

second is that the debate between Catholics and the Communist regime involves the most fundamental realities of our faith.

By reviewing in succession the principal positions taken by Christians who are under a Communist government, we will see how complex the problem is, and to what degree the solutions given call into question our own options as men of the West. The questions that we pose seem unavoidable to me and urgently call for solutions. It would seem naive to believe that one can avoid them, believing that Communism is only a brief "parenthesis of history." If these are questions which cannot be avoided, they also cannot be treated too quickly; they require many nuances and a maximum effort at lucidity.

The exodus of the Vietnamese Catholics

ACCORDING TO RECENT STATISTICS, two-thirds of the Catholics of North Viet-Nam have gone south, abandoning what, after their faith, would be most precious to them, their native land. Four hundred thousand remained in the North, and it seems that if the Geneva agreements had been fully respected, departures for South Viet-Nam would have been even more numerous.

This unprecedented exodus has occasioned the most diverse commentary in the western press. Whether to praise or to denounce the operation, its political importance has been emphasized. The South Viet-Nam government of Diem obviously sees its position reinforced by this influx of 800,000 Catholics. We know that the Geneva agreements anticipated elections for all of Viet-Nam in July 1956. Wicked tongues have even said that Diem's government was exploiting the existence of the refugees in order to attract foreign aid.

More often, at least in the Catholic press, it has been said that these Catho-

lics had left their native villages for *specifically religious reasons*. They wanted to save the freedom of their faith and their religious practice. For this, they gave up everything: such a renouncement should make us reflect on the habitual quality of our own Christian life. Although we should not neglect the history of the evangelization of Viet-Nam if we are to understand the situation of Catholics in the life of the nation, and although individual reasons may well have existed in addition to a specifically religious motive, it would be hard to deny that the latter was the determining factor.

But who can deny that this collective decision of the Christians of North Viet-Nam presents some arduous problems? It might be useful for Western Catholics to begin a serious auto-criticism, in order to disclose the profound compromises that were attached to the mission policy of the past. For it is clear that the situation of the Christian communities of Viet-Nam, in spite of constant efforts at purification, was largely a tributary of the liaison, whether direct or indirect, with the colonial enterprise.

Here we come to the precise question: in this face-to-face meeting of Catholics and Communism, difficult enough in itself, and aggravated in Viet-Nam by the historical compromises that we have suggested, is the exodus to be justified *in the name of the faith*? In our eyes the problem is not that the Catholics left, but that they justified their departure in terms of specifically religious motives.

The problem of persecution is not new in the Church; many writings of the Fathers speak of it. They speak unsympathetically of what they call "flight" before real or possible persecution, and would appear to be pressed if asked to justify a massive exodus. It would be fair to tell them that the circumstances

are no longer the same. But are they different to the point of demanding a different way of expressing the faith? The Christians of the first centuries, too, had no way of foreseeing in any immediate future a changed attitude on the part of the government.

Besides, Christians have been given definitive instruction on the subject of persecution: our Master has told us, "You will be persecuted." Christians have as their mission to be the leaven in the dough, whatever that dough may be. The gospel does not say "in the degree to which that dough is receptive to the leaven." Shall we say that the Christian communities of Viet-Nam were so enclosed within themselves (history explains why) that they were incapable of challenging this new dough? Are we to doubt the power of God?

The objection will surely be made that this is an easy thing to say when one is not personally involved. This is true, but the question that we raise is not a purely theoretical one for the western Catholic. If Communist power came to dominate Europe, what should be done? Does one have the right to flee as soon as an opportunity presents itself? When the Communist threat was felt most keenly a few years ago, some Catholic households set out to establish themselves in South America or North Africa. Could they have used the argument that they were acting on the demands of their faith?

There is another position to examine, which might be presented as follows:

"Communism is not only atheistic, but anti-human. It destroys the human personality. Therefore it is to be condemned and may be fought by all the means at our disposal. Since it is difficult to justify a preventive war—though some would not rule out the utilization of the atomic bomb—we must resist each new invasion. If only the initiative

would be taken by the Communists! Then we would respond as a matter of right, and raise the iron and bamboo curtains forever. The faith would be free. Under present conditions, the Vietnamese Christians were right to flee the North: they will be able to battle against the regime more efficaciously from without than within. When victory has been achieved, they will re-unite their country."

What should we think of such reasoning? It reduces itself again to a wish for a new crusade, gathering together all effective forces for this end, before they become enslaved by the enemy. But can this crusade be justified? In any case, the problem ought to be considered in great detail. It is true that men have the right and even the duty to fight against any ideology which seriously challenges the meaning of human dignity. It is also true that the faith is linked to a certain vision of man which Communist ideology does not respect: it is for this reason that Communism, as an ideology, is condemned by the Church. But does one fight an ideology by waging war? Does condemning it in the name of faith justify an exodus? Does it not rather call for a policy of presence, so that the leaven inserted in the dough might help it rise while transforming it from within? Is this not the traditional historical behavior of the Christian?

We are not alone in asking these questions. Other Christian communities have posed them when confronted with a Communist invader, and deliberately answered them in a different way.

The Christian Community of Shanghai

AN ADMIRABLE BOOK¹ has just been published, presenting a vivid account of the life of the Christian community of Shanghai, from the arrival of the Communists to the present. It

made me think of the famous letter of the churches of Lyon and Vienna to the churches of Asia (2nd century), in which the persecuted Christians of Lyon and Vienna relate for the benefit of their brethren in the faith, the marvels worked by God during the persecutions at the conclusion of the 2nd century. The same atmosphere of triumph is found in this book, which is like a long message, written in blood and joy, from the Christian community of Shanghai to all their brethren throughout the world, to tell them of the great things that God has not ceased to do for them.

What are the great things that God has not ceased to do for the Christians of Shanghai? He has made them discover the riches of their faith. The Communists have progressively taken away from them all their institutional props, with the exception of the eucharistic reunion, at least until a few months ago. No more Catholic school, no more Catholic Action movements, no more Legion of Mary. Until a few months ago they simply had the Mass, with all that the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of Bread may have to overwhelm those Christians who will allow themselves to be fashioned by it, from day to day. Through this lived participation in the paschal mystery, there arose an atmosphere of joyous witness in the midst of a city of 6,000,000, who were secretly moved by the attitude of those poor "children." They do not consider fleeing before persecution; if sometimes such a temptation arises, it is rejected for what it is, and letters are sent to their friends in Hong-Kong to return to Shanghai to share in the great days of their life.

We are tied by baptism to Christians of this stamp. They were feeble like ourselves, sometimes as indifferent; they worked in the apostolate, within the framework of the familiar movements.

Until quite recently, they had the eucharistic bread and the biblical word. Today the bishop himself is in prison, as well as most of the parish clergy. The unique refuge is now Jesus Christ alone, and the Christian community which is his Body. But never has the city of Shanghai spoken of Catholics as at present, never before has the testimony given so resembled that which converted the Roman empire.

As to the secular domain, have the Christians of Shanghai collaborated with the government? There is no doubt that they love China, they are proud that it has grown in the eyes of the world, they are true patriots. But as a Christian community they refuse to serve the ends of the government. The latter would like to dispose of the Catholic community according to its pleasure, but the Catholics refuse all "dialogue" between the government and the Church. By definition, this dialogue is impossible. They have even discovered that the community that they form among themselves has been sustained from Above, and that therefore it cannot as such inscribe itself in the national community. As private citizens they are members of the national community, and in that title they collaborate, at least passively, with the objectives of the government. What makes a frank and loyal collaboration difficult, is that the government attempts to go beyond its competence, and to utilize a frank collaboration on the level of secular objectives for its own ideological ends.

This is the message of the Christians of Shanghai. It contains matter to make us reflect seriously on the concrete conditioning of our faith. Is not the entire "institutional" aspect of the Church called into question, when we see a flourishing Christian life there where the institutional props are lacking?

Let us note, however, that in one sense the "institutional" has never been as powerful as now in Shanghai. What has taken place is the progressive disappearance of traditional institutional means, making for the strengthening of a far more supple "institution" without official character, the tiny community of faith, whose cohesion rests on the personal engagement of each Christian. And all the tiny communities of faith know that they are dramatically united in a common destiny around their bishop, who even in prison is Jesus Christ among them. The essential institution of Catholicism, the particular Church, has never known such a flowering at Shanghai as now.

The Institution is a necessity in the Church. But it can never allow itself to be reduced to a lifeless administration, in which the ties among Christians are purely anonymous. At such a moment there would no longer be anything but a residue of institution, not the hope and the charity, which re-uniting them in the faith, ought always to be the support of the community of the baptized. When Christians stop living their baptism, the specifically church institutions die as well.

But the permanence of the institutions, by itself, can give rise to illusions. We imagine that the Christian life is profound, and in reality it may be very superficial. Then instead of revivifying the essential institutions, the Mass and the sacraments, one prefers to add new institutions, in which a personal engagement is again aroused, but it is not always oriented to the essential institutions. For example it may happen that active members of Catholic Action groups consider participation at the Eucharist relatively unimportant.

At all cost one must watch to see that the institution allows an authentic personal engagement. The Mass, for ex-

ample, is a meal, a reunion of the community. We must admit that the manner in which it is often presented to the faithful hardly facilitates any gesture on their part which would be truly a personal thanksgiving to the Father for the great things that he does not cease to do for his people. Moreover, the most terrible aspect of the situation is that few seem concerned. Many Christians accept the structures of the Church, without reacting in one way or another. The Church asks them to go to Mass every Sunday; they go; what more do they have to do to be good Christians!

Of course, there is far more to be said of the problem of the Institution in the Church. Apart from the specifically religious institutions, those which bear the engagement of faith, there are many, especially in our countries, which involve Catholic custom, which are organized for Catholics, and which in some way make the specifically Church community descend to the level of the civil community. There are Catholic schools, Catholic unions, political parties, newspapers and movie theatres, etc., etc. In themselves, these institutions are good, and they unquestionably aid Christians to live their faith and practice their morality. But if the Christians who are in them are not real Christians, they will quickly take refuge in them as in a fortress, and will build up a ghetto for themselves. Beside this Catholic ghetto, there will be the ghetto of "the opposition," and communication between the two will become less possible. This is serious, for the Christian is supposed to radiate his faith. When Christians set up a ghetto, it is practically necessary, if a non-Catholic is to become a Catholic, that he give up his sociological community, change his union, his paper, his club, and his friends. Although a Catholic party may be a necessary evil at this historical moment, it must not be ac-

companied by a condemnation of the principle of all forms of pluralism. Nor is it necessary that confessional institutions, when they exist, break contacts between Catholics and non-Catholics. Their existence is often a good; it is sometimes an evil, and in that case we must not be afraid to question their legitimacy. Besides, the world moves, and there are survivals of a Christian order which have less and less justification for existence today.

All these are good questions for the theologian. The institution in the Church, whatever it may be, should always be at the service of a living faith and an aid in bearing witness. In any case, we must look for some formula of equilibrium, so that the faith will never be placed in the service of the institutions.

Authentic attempts at active presence

IN ADDITION to the Christians of Shanghai, and others whose commitment in faith resembles that of this community, there are also Christians in China who do not have as clear-cut an attitude towards the Communist regime. We noted that the Christians of Shanghai are deeply attached to their country, and at no price would wish to be used by foreign interests, but they are convinced by experience that any attempt at active collaboration with the regime, even on limited objectives, is doomed to failure. The government would utilize their good will for other ends of their own. Other Chinese Christians—who must not be confused with the small number of priests and laymen who have broken with Rome to form a schismatic Church—consider that in spite of such decisive experiences, they must preserve an attitude of active sympathy with the government, and see to it that all contact should not be broken. We would be able to include in

this number a man like the Vicar-general of Peking, who has been unfairly abused in some press commentaries. If he has not been followed by the whole Christian community, it is perhaps necessary to blame those foreign missionaries who drew the faithful into their private chapels and told them bluntly that the attitude of the Vicar-general was equivocal. Besides, it is at least debatable that the Vicar-general of Peking took up this position of non-rupture precisely in his capacity as chief of the Christian community. The situation would have to be looked at in detail; let us not judge it too quickly. But on first consideration it would appear that it would be preferable to leave this kind of attitude to individual initiative. In any case we know that there are Christians who, after years of prison and horrible suffering, remain convinced that the only valid attitude before a Communist regime is that of active sympathy. The regime will one day be converted; the power of God has vanquished the world.

What are we to think of the attitude of these Christians? It is certainly not the fear of persecution that has made them adopt, deliberately, this orientation, but rather reasons of conscience. And they have done this, after painfully taking into consideration the fact that countless Christians would misunderstand them. We must also not forget that martyrdom is not a state in the Church; it has been the seed of numerous Christians, but may one ever wish for it? The testimony of these Christians who seek to insure a situation in which all contact will not be lost is necessary, just as the witness of the Christians of Shanghai is necessary. Each attitude has its appropriate temptation; for one, it is the danger of compromising the transcendence of Christianity; for the other, it would be a matter of

implicitly questioning the reality of the Incarnation. Are not both types of Christians necessary in order that, beneath the action of the heaven, the conversion of the bread will take place? The question demands careful analysis by the theologian.

Here as in the case of the Christians of Shanghai, we realize that the Catholic Church is a religious community and that in this title it interferes only accidentally in the national community. It is as an individual that the Christian is part of the national community. In both cases, therefore, one is ready to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, because the level on which Caesar works is not to be confused with that of God, although the ties between them are quite strict. On both sides a legitimate independence in the political, social and economic domain is recognized.

If there is a difference between the two attitudes, it is in the manner in which one's role as a citizen is conceived in the present situation. To engage oneself positively in the service of the Communist city indirectly involves the risk of compromising one's faith, since the regime aims at totalitarianism; accordingly, the Christians of Shanghai and many others would say that we should not actively engage ourselves in any way; but the others would say that we should be extremely prudent, and that if we completely break off all contact, the future will be lost.

The Polish Christian "Progressives"

We have tried to distinguish these Christians from those that we have just discussed, but we would also distinguish them from other Christians who call themselves Progressives and who in practice come to break with the Church. These distinctions are necessary, because there is a tendency, within a

certain Christian environment, to treat all these variations as on the same level, and to consider that all these Christians who pursue a policy of presence within the regime, under whatever form, are to be condemned *en bloc*. French "Progressism," an attitude of intellectuals, is still another thing, which we are not discussing here.

We single out the Polish Progressives for various reasons. The importance of Polish Catholicism for the problem which concerns us could hardly be overestimated; these Christians undoubtedly have a sincere faith, and the press speaks about them a great deal and often simplifies the relevant facts of the problem.

One must know, first of all, that Poland is a country that is sociologically Catholic, quite a different situation from that of China, where the Catholic community is only a tiny minority. The history of the Church in Poland shows us the degree to which the Church was linked with a political regime which favored the great land-owners, and which was not always concerned with justice for the people. Communism came in, and in Poland it had to take into consideration the fact that the whole country was Catholic. Reacting against past compromises, and because they suspect that there will be greater justice in the Communist organization of the city, some Christians resolutely undertake to collaborate with the Communists in the construction of the new city. They find themselves in a new world, and they are not sulking. The men of whom we are speaking have a profound faith: it is because they live it that they feel the necessity of not having a simply negative attitude towards the growing civilization.

But why do they ask the Church to bless this new civilization? Why do they seem to say that their civic attitude is

the only one which, in the present context, really springs from evangelical principles? We would like to say to them: "Don't go so fast." Besides, should the Church bless civilizations? Finally, doesn't the present regime involve terrible risks, especially for the growing generation, which has a great deal less religious formation than the Christians of whom we are speaking?

What attitude should we take towards these Christian Progressives? Even if we feel that their attempt is doomed to failure, we should respect them. We must leave to the supreme authority of the Church the condemnation of some of their movements or their publications. Let us use the occasion as an opportunity for self-examination, and remind ourselves that if "progressivism" of this type is possible, it is perhaps because of our own compromises. When we hear some of the reactions of Western Christians, and read the popular Catholic press, we often get the impression that the Christians who constantly accuse others unconsciously wish to justify their own situation which, taken as a whole, is hardly any more defensible.

Here again the theologian ought to throw some light and suggest some nuances—they are too important to be left out. Western Catholic opinion cannot content itself with summary reports on these Christians, who have been driven to take such risks. They neither wish to leave the Church nor to refuse to submit to Rome. When they are condemned, they certainly often submit, but they do so without understanding, and their drama is profound because they feel that they are alone. They have at least the right to our own conversion.

Here we are at the end of a long path; for each step we would need a book to properly develop the question which drew our attention. Our breath-

ren who are confronted by a Communist regime force us to reflect on the fundamental realities of our faith. These pages have raised more questions than it has resolved, and this is proper. The world looks to us today for a renewal, a new youth for our faith, our hope, and our charity. By accepting this effort at re-

newal, we will respond to the intimate requirements of the spirit of poverty. Let us not believe too quickly that we possess the whole truth, and judge our brethren wrongly or in hasty excitement. "He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty."

II. AN EXPERIENCE

THIS SUMMER, a Catholic professor of one of the great Universities of Tokyo, who had just returned from a trip to Communist China, favored us with a detailed report of the situation of the Catholic Church behind the bamboo curtain.

The professor is related to one of the most outstanding jurists in Japan, and his story naturally made a considerable impression in less informed circles. Nevertheless I must say that I too was impressed, and even a little annoyed at the skepticism of some missionaries who rejected the professor's story as a lie or a trick. To account for my annoyance I feel obliged to give this explanation . . . *I too have lied!*

IT IS NOT A MATTER of a lie extorted by torture and exhausting interrogations. Such a lie is retracted immediately afterwards by the man who uttered it after he recovers his mental equilibrium. No, here we are dealing with a lie *en masse*, spoken in a state of consciousness and with a certain freedom.

In order to explain to you the case of 2000 Chinese priests, all liars . . . to a certain degree, nothing is more fitting than to tell you my own case.

In Autumn 1951, when as vicar and free worker, I was in the little city of Lin-ho (Soei yuan, North China), I was walking along one day, my spade on my

Alb.-Felix Verwilghen, CICM

shoulder, across the principal street, which is the main road from Pao-t'ou to Lan-cheou. Before going to work on my field, I wanted to mail a letter to my parents.

At that moment a large truck, loaded with passengers and packages, drove up and stopped in front of the official inn. It was the event of the day! In this part of China there are no trains. Like everyone else, I stopped to see the visitors. They came from the civilized world with its electricity, its running water, its comfort.

I saw a tall foreigner step down. He could be easily picked out from the crowd of Chinese. And he singled me out at first glance, for he thought he was at the end of the world, deep in old China, and was greatly astonished to find a European. He came towards me; I could not avoid the meeting. I did as everyone else; moreover, it was what I had been doing for more than a year.

He spoke English. He asked me, "What are you doing here? What country are you from?" He seemed extremely astonished when I told him I was a Catholic missionary. "I thought all the missionaries were in prison," he said. "You see that isn't so," I told him. "I am free to travel in this area and exercise my ministry." He took out his notebook and wrote down my answers.

"Abroad it is said in all the newspapers that the Catholic Church is persecuted and that many martyrs have been murdered."

I shrugged my shoulders. "They always write lies in the papers. Do you believe everything they print?"

"But is then the Catholic Church still free? Can Christians still go to Church?"

"Obviously," I said smiling, "we ring the bell and the people sing in church; I hear confessions just as formerly, and I give the sacrament of Baptism."

"And what do you think of Communism?"

"It has brought order to the country. Formerly we always were plagued by bandits. Now we are at peace. Before people smoked opium. Now the government functionaries are wide-awake. I prefer order to civil war. Peace is the best ally of the Catholic Church."

"Are you happy to live here as a Catholic priest under a Communist government?"

"Yes, I feel quite happy. I wouldn't leave, or return to Belgium, for anything."

"Thank you very much, Father," the stranger said, "your testimony is of the greatest importance to me. I will not fail to use it in my reports and news accounts."

I put my hoe back on my shoulder and slowly went away.

My heart is still full of sadness when I think of this period of my life. Nevertheless, if it were to begin again, I would still lie!

In order to understand this sadness and this lie, you must also know the rest of my story. But you cannot really know it. These are things that you must live. And I cannot really wish that you undergo persecution.

For the life of pretense, such as the Christian masses live in time of persecu-

tion, is full of sadness. There is nothing in it that would make one foresee the glories of canonization. No, it is rather the disgust of Hell and the despair of Satan that one feels in one's soul...

Among Chinese Priests

TO DISAPPEAR into the camp of the proletariat—to which almost all the priests and nuns of our diocese of Ning-hsia already belonged—I needed the courage to undergo all kinds of humiliations.

The largest part of the Chinese clergy have been driven to it. They did it without the merit of liberty. Since the whole bourgeois world had disappeared, the suffering was general (please understand that I especially mean moral suffering, though there was also physical suffering, and deprivations of all kinds), which made it more bearable.

The situation was different for the missionary clergy, who were foreigners in the country. This eminent clergy, this elite of Chinese missionaries, had brought to fruition so many great works for the apostolate, in education, linguistics, agricultural organization, literature, geography, botany, meteorology, archeology, folklore, and architecture. This clergy had dominated the Chinese people by the level of its culture, and were "spiritual fathers," surrounded by the veneration of their faithful. It was impossible for these austere men, whose dignified faces were adorned by a "venerable beard," to submit to these humiliations by a free choice, by a lying choice, by a choice to act a part... and that is why I lied.

I did not have a beard. I liked the bicycle better than the horse or the mule-cart. I did not like the long soutane that the Chinese bourgeois all wore. I did not like the exaggerated testimonies of respect for the priest. Nor did I want

to shut myself up in my residence as a sign of protest against the injustices and falsehoods of the Communists.

Therefore, I chose the humiliations, and I underwent them, at least for a year and a half, as the Chinese lower clergy underwent them and still undergoes them. It is from the mouths of this "humiliated" clergy that the journalists and the "distinguished guests" of Peking receive their testimonies.

It was not working in the fields that humiliated me. That has even been the occasion of some moving experiences, like that day that I passed through the city of Shenpa dressed as a worker and carrying a shovel. I had gone to visit my bishop, Monsignor van Melckebeke. In order to spend a peaceful day together, we went out to do our daily work. Monsignor carried a little sack which held our food, and smoked his pipe. In the crowded streets Christians inclined their heads with a sad smile, and the party-members raised their heads with pride and scorn. I assure you that we spent a beautiful day under the sun in these fields of potatoes, carrots and tomatoes.

The humiliations began during the indoctrination course. This took place two or three times a week, after work in the evening. Men and women, young and old, took part in them. They weren't abstract lessons. You had to give your whole heart to them. No side remark, no smile, no delay in answering or coldness in declarations of principles went unnoticed by our teachers.

After two years of Communist occupation and administrative organization, the new structures were coming into being. We had chosen the four representatives of our district, a chief, a sub-chief (a woman), and a young man and a young woman to perform various duties. The twelve districts of our section of the city had chosen their communal

council. The communal delegates of all the villages had assembled in the new buildings of the sub-prefect to choose its council and the various provincial delegates. Everyone had understood that this time the organization of the country was a serious matter, a matter of conscience and responsibility, a question of devotion to the national cause, something different from any previous administration.

The meetings of our district were held in two places, the Protestant Church and the court-yard of the Catholic church. The memory of this dispute was in the minds of all the people in our neighborhood. The two Catholic priests had refused to let the church be used for these meetings, and had even appealed to a text in the Constitution of the Popular Republic. It wasn't very nice of them. Why did they wish to apply a law which everyone ignored, against the wishes of the local functionaries?

Among the Protestants there had also been a little resistance. The day they decided to use the Protestant church, the government officials wanted to put President Mao's picture on the wall. At this point several staunch Protestants left the hall. "We wouldn't tolerate pictures of saints and madonnas; we didn't even want to have a crucifix. A cross was enough for us; God must be worshipped in spirit and truth. And now we are forced to give Mao's portrait the place of honor! In that case we won't participate in the service, not even for the reading of the Bible!"

But these souvenirs were only a gentle swell in a vast ocean. The glorious sun of Mao-Tse-Tung arose over the great nation. Everywhere peace reigned in the Empire of the Middle. A formidable army was called into being, an army which was soon to go on to conquer all these poor Asian nations, that had not

yet been unliberated. The ideal of a new World haunted all our minds from morning to evening, and even was in our dreams!¹²

Of course, I have not yet spoken of the police, and I have forgotten the popular tribunals and the executions. Nevertheless, this was a very important aspect of the new structure that was being set up. But it is better that I remain quiet. For at this very moment I feel that strange trembling in my right shoulder. Unconsciously I have turned my head to take a look behind me. There is only the blank wall of my office in the Catholic Committee of Tokyo.

You must excuse me, dear reader; I prefer not to tell the truth about these things... for I have lost confidence. It is more worthwhile to lock up such suffering in the depths of one's heart. In that way it becomes easier to lie... and we are going to have to begin a life of lies all over again, as soon as *they* arrive.

The Uselessness of Spiritual and Eternal Values

THREE TIMES A WEEK our groups got together, men and women, even the aged. But in fact, not much attention was paid to the re-education of the aged. The nation spent its generous forces on us, the workers.

I am only speaking about workers. My Chinese colleague, Father Jacques Ts'ien, was a member of a group of doctors and pharmacists, and went to meetings in the dispensary. The two Chinese nuns, who had a small dispensary for women, were also at these courses. There were also courses for merchants and artisans, while the children had their evening courses at the school. The soldiers and government workers, of whatever degree, were fully instructed in the new doctrines.

Several times a month we participated in the meetings of the community house, formerly a temple of the "Wan-ze-hoei" sect. We all offered our Sunday labor in order to repair the buildings of this temple, and we were proud of our fine community house.

I sat on the ground in the midst of the workers; where we were, they were old farmers. Our clothes were poor; they bore the yellow color of the Chinese earth, the color of faces, of clay houses, and of the sky when the yellow wind fills the world.

Our teachers wore a simple blue cloth suit, an eight-cornered hat, and on their breasts a red star. There were two in our district. Each stayed for two months, but their terms overlapped; one leaves, and one comes every month. Each new teacher brought a new dose of science. They came to us from the provincial capitals, from the great training and indoctrination camps. Each month, too, we assimilated our new dose of materialistic science. This was a practical science, useful for the life of the body and the well-being of the nation: healthy babies, healthy children, healthy sexual life, healthy conditions for labor, modern cities, greater planning for country districts, well-being everywhere.

This material ideal has grown in the hearts of the tens of thousands of young Chinese! Believe me; I'm not making up propaganda. Re-read the reviews of Chinese youth of the period after the first world war; for 30 years, thousands of university students have avidly swallowed a materialistic literature. They have fought and they have suffered. They have hoped, even in times of famine and defeat.

We must study the history of the Communist movement, in the books of the party as well as in the newspapers of our times. We cannot content ourselves with an *a priori* rejection. The

effort must be made, even if it is difficult to find out the truth, for we are not concerned with a casual headline, but with the great change in the largest nation in the world.

I did not rise during the course. I made no protest. I remained seated and paid attention to what was told me. I answered questions. I recited the lesson of the previous day. I took part in the discussion of the new material, and brought up difficulties. I didn't want to overcome my teacher with involved questions or philosophical objections, which for me would be easy to find. I often received this encouraging word from the teacher: "Very good, Comrade Wei, you are making progress in Marxism. Your mind is not rebellious to the new people's doctrine."

In the beginning when I was still curate and still had two small schools, I participated in the Saturday afternoon public confession. First each child accused himself of infractions of the rules during the previous week, then the children accused each other, then the teacher accused himself in front of the students, then the children accused their teacher. I underwent this small humiliation of accusing myself before these Chinese children. I did it without constraint. I said that it was a fine custom, that it would improve the spirit of our schools. I listened, a little astonished, to the candid and often quite relevant remarks of my young pupils: "Priest, you are too slow in washing up in the morning. You make mistakes in Chinese that we have corrected several times. You eat your rice too slowly. Your conversations with this or that Christian man or woman sometimes last too long. You walk a little stooped. You don't take enough exercise."

Surely, everyone ought to be allowed his freedom. If Catholics want to say their prayers, let them. We are not

going to prevent them. But that should not become a rein on progress. The construction of the country requires all the energies of all men.

Bodily health takes the place of honor. The physical, agricultural, industrial and economic development of the country is the total ideal of the young Communist. All that old dusty world of temples no longer has any meaning—you should have seen the ruin of the old Chinese religions. The automatic recitation of beads in Lamaism was just a waste of time—you should have seen the emptiness of these ceremonies and the disorder of Tibetan monasteries! All these structures are of the past, like the orphanages, convents and seminaries of the Catholics. (Although I don't want to generalize, I have often asked myself why so many of the young, formed in the rigid secular structures of the Church, submitted to their first contact with the real life of the large cities. Obviously, something is hollow, something is wrong, and it cannot be the eternal word of God; it must then be our manner of understanding it.)

The only value is daily life. This life must be ameliorated. We cannot delay ourselves with hypothetical promises of a future happiness. We have no scientific certitude on an after-life. Materialistic humanism is on the way to fashion Man, a man of flesh and blood, who will be firmly based on the Chinese land, eternal land, cradle of true culture!

Voluntary Coolies, Free and Happy

WE APPEARED to be coolies. The immense vistas of the Mongolian plateau were sharp and pure. Around us were the yellow and green waves of the new harvests and the yellow hills. The Yellow River carried along its fine yellow mud and gave assistance to thousands of irrigation canals. Here and

there were groups of willow trees, and scarcely visible, a village heaped up in the yellow earth.

We worked on a new dike, the first real dike constructed in this country since human history began to bury the debris of civilization. We were proud to participate in this work which was all performed by manual labor. What did that matter, since there were more than 4000 workers in my sector that I could see every time I dropped my two baskets at the top of the levee.

I simply tied a towel around my loins; my body burned in the clear air. My shoulder ached from the porter's bar. I asked myself how I could last the last hour before noon. The baskets had seemed so light that morning! I had been able to climb the slope in one gallop, but soon I was able to take only slow, slanting steps. I descended with precaution, and tried to conserve my energy. Intellectuals are not cut out for this kind of work.

In the morning the foremen (workers chosen by ourselves for our respective districts) came to assign each of us to our daily task. With a cord they measured a rectangle. Each worker was to dig the ground about four feet deep. The ditches were dug by evening. The earth was muddy and heavy; the amount transported by each worker could easily be measured, almost to the number of baskets he could carry away.

No curses were heard. Sometimes a Communist song arose; we sang them a great deal. Some were learned at the evening courses, and soon swept through the countryside. Some were fascinating, like those of the opereta "Pei-mae-niu."

Some of the workers around me were completely naked. No one paid any attention to them. There were no women or girls near the work camps.

Noon rang out on an old bell, taken

from some demolished temple. We washed ourselves a little in a nearby pool and went to the farm, carrying our little baskets. We went in long lines past large cauldrons, where kitchen workers filled our cups with yellow millet, boiled in water. We sat down on the ground, and comrades from the same district would share dirty vegetables and fresh bits of garlic. The big eaters succeeded in polishing off four cups, but I could scarcely finish two, although I knew how to use the chop sticks. We also drank one or two cups of water in which the millet had been boiled. After a little rest we went back to work. In the middle of the afternoon they again brought us hot water to drink and in the evening we had another meal that was similar to the one at noon.

Before we went to bed, we sang; I took my flute, we told stories; they asked me for all kinds of explanations about Catholicism. The comrades called me *You-fou-ze*, a familiar name, equivalent to Felix. When I said my prayers, they would come over to sit around me. Formerly they had shown me reverence; now they loved me. The first night I was, like the rest of them, under the beautiful stars, but the next night, on the suggestion of the comrades, two foremen intervened to obtain a place for me on the furnace bed of the farm. There I slept between two rough workers, on the flag-stones of the platform, covered by a blanket.

The gigantic effort to reconstruct our country kept us constantly alert, in a physical community which laughed and suffered with one heart. I do not want to speak of the fear. That was present everywhere, but was never mentioned; it was an area of understanding to which we were not allowed to allude. That sorrow in the silence of the soul must be allowed to die!

Violated consciences

I THINK THAT a complete analysis of that state of soul is extremely complex. It would require a lengthy demonstration, based on attentive research carried on by experts in psychology. But I assure you that at the moment when this transformation took place in me, I was extremely conscious of it, and that I knew very well that I was helping and sharing in one of the most important events of modern history.

Yes, I confess to you in all frankness: I participated in that monstrous lie which is the daily life of the masses whose conscience has been violated.

This immense tragedy is absolutely indescribable. In the first phase there is the sparkle, scarcely visible, of true martyrs. Carried off by the whirlwind of great events, they passed almost unnoticed. Some martyrdoms have been glorious; they will be remembered. But silence rapidly followed and the great comedy was played out.

We knew what the Communist leaders had done against the Church. We knew that they hated religion as "the opium of the people." Nevertheless, we showed them respect, we sang in their honor, we hailed their speeches, we celebrated the new popular holidays.

Catholic priest of the diocese of Ninghsia, vicar of Linhe, on the first of May 1951, I marched in the parade with a red flag. On the flag it said "Long live President Mao-Tse-Tung and the Chinese Republic." I raised the flag every time I cried out a slogan. There were slogans in honor of Stalin and Lenin, who I knew perfectly well were determined enemies of all that was dearest to me in the world. I paraded before the Communist authorities, I sang the military chants of the Red Army with all my might.

The following day I participated in

a people's street dance. It was perfectly ridiculous. Someone asked me, "Aren't you a Catholic priest any more?" I answered, "Yes, I'm still a priest." He asked, "Can priests also do the people's dance for the new year?" I answered, "Have you forgotten the ten commandments of God and the six commandments of the Church? Are the popular dances forbidden? Love the will of God, then do as you please." He then asked, "In that case you don't disapprove of the attitude of the Chinese priests and nuns?" I said plainly, "How can you think of such a thing? They are your priests and your nuns. They have vowed their lives to Jesus. They have done this for you. Did you think that it was cowardice on their part? You will never be able to show them enough devotion and love. My heart is exactly as theirs. Our bishop Wang knows all this and loves us more than his own brothers and sisters. Go away and don't forget what I said."

The morning of May 3rd brought meetings against the reactionaries. There were harangues against bad functionaries of the past regime (and we knew there were some) and against the bad rich (where could they not be found?). Toward noon we were brought together to a great square where about 10,000 were assembled before a platform. This matter was too important for anyone to think of dinner! The meeting lasted more than four hours, and no one could rise during the whole time.

After introductory remarks and military songs, the guilty were brought in. Their hands were tied behind their backs and their heads were bent; they were not permitted to look at their accusers. There was no defense, no lawyer, no examination of evidence. The accusations were vulgar and shameful. I believe more than 99% of those present were disgusted with the process. But

who does not remember the popular cruelty of these people during the persecutions against the Christians? And who does not remember the cruelty of civilized peoples—the treatment of Negroes and the gas chambers of Auschwitz?

In the talks of the Red spokesmen mention was often made of the opium trade, the luxurious life of foreigners in the foreign concessions, the humiliating situation of this great country which had sent 200,000 workers to the European front in 1914-18 and had not even received in exchange the German areas in Chinese territory.

Between two ranks of arrogant soldiers the lamentable handful of ruined rich men were marched. Everything went quickly. The crowd pressed forward, overflowing the ruined ramparts. The human avalanche halted on a vague terrain, dotted with dusty tombs and an ignoble monument to the victory over the Japanese. The condemned were lined up; there were bursts of fire, and three by three the bodies sank to the ground.

Among those executed there was one of my Christians, a former mayor, who never made his Easter duty. From far away I gave him absolution *in articulo sub conditione* . . . The crowd surrounded the bodies and I saw feet stamp on the ground that was covered with blood. The parents of my mayor Wang came with a wagon to take away his body; his skull was broken and his face was unrecognizable. "I will offer Mass tomorrow morning for the repose of his soul." The daughter looked at me with savage eyes. She recognized me. Her smile was of an unspeakable sadness, "Thank you, priest." I went back to my little lodgings to pray. How many texts suggested themselves: "Ut quid, Domine, recessisti longe . . . Circumdederunt me

canes multi, tauris pingues obsederunt me . . ."

"No, I can no longer find a guide for myself in this total confusion. How easy it would be to shut myself up in this room to pray and study . . . But I want to continue to live the life of this people. I want to participate in the monstrous evolution of these 600,000,000 men. I want to feel in my soul and my body their bitterness and their contradictions, the rape and the mutilation of consciences."

Judge Not and You will not be Judged

IT IS NOW three and a half years since I left China. I have only a vague knowledge of what has happened in the intervening years.

I remember the indignation I felt when I departed: the free world doesn't know what has taken place. Free men, who have not undergone this spiritual violation, do not understand the indecisive and confused messages that come from behind the bamboo curtain.

Unhappily, I myself have already undergone the glutting effect of freedom's accomplices. I have almost become accustomed to its luxury and easy life. I find that it is very natural to wear my priestly attire, and not to see around me those arrogant and insulting faces. I buy a train ticket without thinking of authorizations from the district representative, the village leader, or the chief of police—those three unavoidable Communist permissions. Accordingly, I am now living in the bourgeois complicity of happy men who do not think about suffering in union with their brother martyrs.

Nevertheless, in the depths of my conscience, there is a very stubborn attitude, which always prevents me from judging the position of the Chinese priests—an attitude of complicity and humiliation, of bitter compromise and miserable suffering.

When I read some correspondent's account, when I listen to some traveler's story from Red China, I know very well that these priests have not told the truth. They have not betrayed their flock; they have not revealed to spies that place in their hearts and in the hearts of their people, where they hide the disgusts and the hopes that they cannot reveal.

I beg you not to judge the journalists. They have done what they could to discover the truth. How could they know that they have been the dupes of such a complex situation? How could they understand what goes on in the soul of these masses whose conscience has been so abused? Why would they suspect that all the priests whom they questioned—all of them, from first to last—have lied, have hidden the truth, have pronounced words that have been learned by heart, words that are empty of meaning, which are devoid of everything, even the scars of the rape.

The newspaper men cannot know what goes on in the Catholic Church in Communist countries. Even you cannot feel what is in my heart, despite the effort that I make to give you my thought... because your heart has not been attacked.

I beg you not to judge the priests. They are guarding their flock, they are suffering with them. They persevere in the faith in the midst of conditions of which no simple tourist has any idea. They bear witness for God, for Christ, for the Catholic Church! For the vast majority, they maintain the purity of their vocation, while on all sides they are solicited, mocked, humiliated, tempted. They continue to dispense the sacraments, at the cost of so many sacrifices!

Do you know what it costs today, for a priest in Mongolia, to succeed in obtaining a bottle of wine for Mass? Do you remember Graham Greene's

The Power and The Glory?... Dramas take place under the noses of the journalists, of which they know nothing; it all goes on behind the scenes. Poor priests who are deprived of everything! They have lost their breviaries, their sacred vestments, their books of spiritual reading, their manuals of theology, liturgy, morals. They are in a situation where it is impossible for them to know of any announcements of Rome. They learn the truth from fragments that have been deformed, that have no appearance of veracity, after being told that "a capitalistic political message of the collaborator with America, the brigand of the Vatican," is going the rounds. There are truths which are sublime for pure eyes and for hearts at peace. They make no impressions on eyes that are veiled and on hearts that have been violated.

We are not dealing here with a distinction between "Progressives" and non-Progressives. That Professor whom I mentioned at the beginning of my article met too many priests for us to be able to call them all renegades. It is simply a question of priests whose conscience has been violated. I tell you that they have all undergone this suffering, with and because of their flock.

I wish only that the journalists and the ministers would stop interrogating the priests of China. If you interrogate them, you are asking them to lie. But to oblige a martyr to offer a lie is to make a mockery of his martyrdom.

You would not want this witness to bear his testimony before a journalist. Besides, what testimony can he offer? Do you want to hear him say, "Yes, the government persecutes us." Do you think the testimony of a true martyr takes this form?

The Christian martyr ought to bear witness to Christ and his Church.

But we do not permit him to bear

this witness. Or rather, he is obliged to bear this witness, while persevering in his vocation and continuing to be a priest. And he is giving his testimony with a magnificent heroism. Its brilliance is a continual source of exasperation and anger for the men of the Party.

But this testimony will always remain hidden from newspaper men and official visitors coming from abroad. From the bottom of my heart my wish is that no minister or journalist will ever succeed in penetrating this mystery. For thanks to this mystery, the Catholic faith will not die in Communist China.

translated by JOSEPH E. CUNNEEN

NOTES

¹ *Les chrétiens dans la ville* (Casterman, Paris, 1955).

² It is obvious that these thoughts do not represent unanimous opinion. But it is also obvious that missionaries or other foreigners, spending five years in jail, confined to their residence, or even allowed a little liberty, since they have not truly mingled in the intimate life of Communist society, are unaware of the thoughts and feelings of the Chinese masses today.

Almost all Chinese priests in China (except for a few outstanding heroes, who resisted every idea of compromise and were imprisoned in Red jails) and a few rare missionaries lived through this transformation—not as spectators but as actors. At present this psychic evolution is an accomplished fact in all of China. No journalist can test it, what can be tested are its external results. The interior drama will always remain a mystery for those who have not themselves lived it.

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THE REBIRTH OF CATHOLIC OBEDIENCE

FRIEDRICH HEER

"The Saints were obedient, not subservient" (Georges Bernanos). "The authority of the Church in giving commands is directed towards a supernatural goal—This authority is alien to a totalitarianism that does not recognize nor permit an appeal to the commands of conscience—The authority of the Church does not wish to enslave the human person but to insure its freedom and its perfectibility by freeing it from the weaknesses, errors, and mistakes that sooner or later end in disgrace or enslavement." (Pius XII in his address before the Supreme Papal Court of Justice on October 2, 1945).

TODAY THERE is a reproachful question directed at Catholicism, asked and often answered affirmatively by non-Catholic Christians, Liberals, Socialists, and deistic Humanists, by Asiatic and African thinkers: the question whether Catholicism is not a totalitarian system, especially so in its demand of total obedience. Is not clerical fascism the father or at least the elder brother of all the totalitarian systems of our time?— This reproach by creative intellectuals of quite diverse origin is taken very seriously by profound Catholic thinkers: Karl Rahner in his thorough, critical report at the meeting for the preparation of the "First All-Austrian Catholic Conference" after 1934 warned the Church, i.e. us Catholics, not to give itself the appearance of a totalitarian system, and Gustav A. Wetter, S. J., the director of the Collegium Russicum in

Rome, has shown an abundance of parallels between Soviet thinking, the Soviet system, and Catholicism, and has admitted that "the enumerated analogies between Bolshevism and Christianity, above all in the former's Catholic stamp, are something much deeper than purely external similarities." The main worldwide reproach against Catholicism is directed against the practice and idea of Catholic obedience. It is said this breaks the conscience, the will to freedom and responsibility, and creates a mass of obedient coordinated church-sheep, whom new totalitarian rulers of the state could manage and rule according to their pleasure—as happened in Germany and the predominantly Catholic satellite-states of eastern Europe, as well as in Argentina.

Before we can take up the fundamental question, "the crisis of obedience in the Church" (as the Spanish Dominican Emilio Sauras has clearly formulated it), it seems advisable to exhibit briefly the anti-Christian caricature of Catholic obedience in the totalitarian and semi-totalitarian political systems of our time. In imitation of the utopian, Faustian inventor of men and makers of gods arising in the Middle Ages and the baroque period, these systems try to force their victims by a strange "monastic" process into letting themselves be politically coordinated through terror, forced labor and over-exertion. The forms of obedience compelled by a forced pseudo-asceticism are more multifarious than one might think. Even certain tests and demands of inter-human relationships fall into this category when, say, all school, psychological, political and social means are employed to eliminate every personal impulse be-

Friedrich Heer is well remembered by CROSS CURRENTS readers for his articles on the priest-workers in France (Spring-Summer 1954), and on St. Thérèse of Lisieux (Fall 1955). This essay appeared in HOCHLAND, August 1955.

cause it retards or increases the cost of the production-process. This wicked use of the "monastic" method which contributes only to an agglomeration, since it obligates people to just a few political and philosophical slogans, standard concepts and tricks in office, work, school, press, radio, sport, war-industry and pleasure-industry, makes use of an apparatus for forcing obedience that is being developed with ever greater finesse.

Obedience of a narrow and not infrequently dangerous variety is being compelled today by schools of every sort and ideology, by the recruit-training stations, by the civilian concentration-camps (KZs), the clinics and the psychiatric institutions for experimenting on human beings. One must direct his gaze at the management of welfare, hospitals, schools, and public information precisely in the freest states and lands such as Sweden, in order to be able to see through the crystal-clear, hygienically perfect demoniacal nature of this "voluntary" asceticism with its many forced obligations to performances of obedience of all sorts. It is one of the characteristic features of the bureaucratic, centralized and industrialized structures of our time that they strive immanently to force more and more obedience. They rob man of imagination, of the delight in new games, of his life-will, of the capacity for new births. Between the "weariness of the good people" who are lamed because they have wounded themselves in the clutches of ecclesiastical administrative apparatus and organizations, and the frequent suicides in technically perfected welfare-states (Sweden has the greatest percentage of suicides in Europe) there exists an inner connection. The over-cared-for and overworked person loses joy in life and in the responsibility of freedom; he plunges into external activity and into attempts at suicide of all sorts. Here it is important

to establish the fact: all power groups and organizations—political, ecclesiastical, or others—are equally exposed to the temptation of demanding more and more obedience. Meanwhile the technical possibilities and means of external command are growing. More orders can be given to greater and greater masses by means of radio, films, and television. And the illusion is nourished that an ever more frequent giving of commands, which extends even into details of daily behavior, produces real fulfillment of the commands and a manifestation of obedience, whereas in reality it destroys the substance of genuine obedience.

Cardinal Feltrin confirmed this fact in 1954: "Even the word obedience awakens at present in all circles and classes of society psychological impulses and reflexes of vexation and indignation." Hence the urgent necessity of "re-thinking theologically and determining accurately the whole problem of obedience from the ground up." It goes beyond the possibilities of the present study and its author to illuminate these unsolved problems in all their fundamental relations. Perhaps, however, we can be of help by introducing a discussion on the necessary rebirth of Catholic obedience.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY and the early twentieth century, in which the Church began to lose the intellectuals, the creative men, the "tension-men" (poets, thinkers, artists, scientists), then the masses of the bourgeoisie, of the working class, and finally also of the peasantry, was full of the tragedies of unsuccessful proceedings involving obedience. As injured men there must be considered in this connection Rosmini, Gioberti, Manzoni (the measure of the inner tragedy of this great Catholic poet is gradually becoming evident today), furthermore Lamennais,

Döllinger, Günther, in some respects also John Henry Newman, then the smaller and larger Catholic non-conformists of Europe down to Loisy and Buonaiuti. This is a very considerable band of Catholic scholars and theologians, for whom as *bearers* of obedience the creative act of genuine obedience was a failure, but also there were the prelates and bishops who were not successful as *commanders* of obedience. Christopher Dawson once compiled the host of prominent ex-priests and ex-theologians who as an élite of European thinkers stamped the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries intellectually. These persons who through flight withdrew from obedience were preceded by those popes of the Middle Ages who immoderately commanded obedience and in so doing ruined themselves politically and ecclesiastically, like that Boniface VIII who was condemned to hell by Dante as "gran bestia nera", and whose bull "Unam sanctam" had asserted a total *political* authority of the Pope.

Not until the dawn of the new era in the Church under Leo XIII could there be a suspension of this maxim dangerous to life today; but the criticism within the Church of the political maxims of that bull started only today—and not by chance in the New World and by men of that order which promised the Pope genuine obedience in the fullness of a Catholicity which obligates all partners equally: by Jesuits like John Courtney Murray.—This catastrophic failure in the execution of Catholic obedience teaches three facts: first, that, especially in the last few centuries, the learning of genuine Catholic obedience and knowledge about it grew weak both in those performing obedience as well as in those commanding it; second, that this phenomenon stands in direct connection with the narrowed concept of

the Church, (as the works on dogmatics and ecclesiastical manuals from the 18th to the early 20th century show, in which the Church appears reduced to a juridical organization of domination with a disregard for its integral, sacramental, and spiritual dimension); finally, that in the age of defection from the Church—now coming to an end—and in the disintegration of genuine Catholic obedience, there proliferate external manifestations of obedience such as had never before appeared from the days of the apostles far into the eighteenth century.

On the whole, Catholics regard obedience as an object of duty in school, as "a foregone conclusion, about which among good Catholics one does not need to talk." The knowledge of the supernatural, divine character of Catholic obedience has been lost. On the other hand, obedience is often considered by the same circles a "necessary evil," if not even denounced as something used by the ambitious who wish to rise in church, state, and society. The lip-service within the group veils an inner vacuum. This kind of obedience, as well as the remarkable inexperience of Catholics in the exercise of true obedience, are based on the historical situation of European Catholics since the Reformation and on some particular conditions of the nineteenth century. Much more than we know, we are fettered to the age of the Counter-Reformation, and therefore have not pressed forward to overcome secularism with a new voice that has universal validity. We are much more of the nineteenth century than we should like to admit.

The age of the Counter-Reformation had reduced rich tension within Catholic obedience to the party discipline of a band of followers trained for war and polemics. "Obedience is everything": this is now understood as loyalty to the

party line. We march in closed ranks; whoever does not follow his prince, general, bishop, or seminary director is a "traitor," a "deserter," and must be especially persecuted. There has developed a remarkable mutual supervision of the fellow-combatants, which often consumes more energy than the fight against external opponents. This military interpretation of Catholic obedience is, in the nineteenth century, narrowed, rendered middle-class, and reduced to the ghetto-consciousness of a clan besieged on all sides by enemies. ("Loyalty" now acquires a peculiarly sourish, sentimental, vindictive flavor); "Loyally Catholic" means, to follow the pastor: to read the newspapers, join the clubs, choose the party which he recommends—to do otherwise seems somehow to endanger one's salvation. Many "pious Catholics" now identify the Church with *their* club and outdo each other in manifestations of obedience for *their* bishop. One is a Catholic who adheres unconditionally to his own party.

Criticism of Catholic poets, publishers, and scientific historians tends to be carried on under the motto, they insulted *our* Holy Father. He brings "disgrace" to the Church who dares to question the black and white picture of the "good Catholic" novels and biased historical sketches, and dares to exhibit abuses and blunders within the ecclesiastical domain. The uncomfortable questions raised by Bishop Swoboda in his *Care of Souls in a Metropolitan City* (Vienna, 1912) earned for him the judgment, "This man has brought disgrace to our diocese." With the same words Abbé Godin and the first worker-priests were branded in 1947. Whoever does not submit to the taboos of the community is "disobedient." He does not have that "obedience" which is often the product of a neurotic anxiety and the narrow-mindedness of parishioners who see how

millions of persons go other ways. How can the "dear God" permit these defeats of the Church? Completely unheeded is the warning expressed by Georges Bernanos that "the suppression of the high and indispensable human function known as judgment can only lead to catastrophes—men who are trained to obey blindly will suddenly disobey just as blindly. To obey without objection is different from obeying without understanding, and total submissiveness is not so far removed from total revolt as one thinks. Christian obedience possesses in its essence an heroic character."

The psychopathic nature of this "Obedience-Christianity" became strikingly evident in a characteristic happening in France. During the pontificate of Leo XIII, those French Catholics, who year after year in the pilgrimages to Rome had constantly declared their readiness to sacrifice everything for *their* Holy Father, suddenly overwhelmed the cardinal legate of the Pope with threats and insulting letters, when the Pope wished to reconcile them with the Republic. Behind a thousand demonstrative acts of obedience may be concealed an insurrection against God, a rebellion in the Church, a cancerous tumor which destroys the marrow of Catholicism. Without knowing it, without consciously willing it, great masses of these extremely obedient parishioners have wandered away from God in an *émigration intérieure* and have abandoned the fullness of Catholicity and the Trinity in favor of a "god" who often is little more than a "screen" (as Pius XI called it) for their special wishes and interests. The present day impotence of world-Catholicism in the execution of its own peace program, social reforms, and missionary enterprises, results from the weakening of the Church by her extremely "obedient" servants. Such servants are firmly determined to accept from *their* Holy

Father, *their* pastor, only what seems to them "right and proper"; they know exactly what is appropriate in society, in world-politics, in the treatment of workers, negroes, Jews. (A tremendous *hubris* is concealed behind this façade of obedience.) Frequently they even think that the "dear Lord" will no longer be able to manage the world if they do not help him to restore the "right world-order." Thousands of telegrams of homage to Rome, all the external manifestations of submission, cover up a chaos, a flight from the genuine, inner attitude of obedience towards God and Church. The obedience-Christian knows exactly what is fitting for God. World-political developments which do not fit into his concepts seem inappropriate—he knows the plans of God! A large part of "Christian" history—tales about the decadence of Europe in the modern era, legends about the Middle Ages as the golden age of Christianity—is but wishful thinking. Do we fear that Redemption is too weak for the modern world?

The sincere, truly pious Christian looks first at God and is ready to let himself be convinced by God of his defective Catholicity, his weakness of faith; he seeks to recognize God's ways and directions in God's "detours," in His ways with diverse humanity, which today amid much travail is growing together as never before. The obedience-Christian is not at all interested in the desires and needs, the psychic and political structures of the people in Asia and Africa, he is quite ready to civilize them, and to prepare them for the kingdom of God, as he understands it, by means of seminaries and car-loads of devotional tracts. He "possesses" the truth—nothing is more treacherous than this presumption. He hears only himself even when he hears a sermon, and how can he read the Bible, that most un-

comfortable book, in which so many passages must be rethought? Even by his most obedient servants, God is appropriated. If God is denied absolute authority over history, He can be pledged to one's own party, and the obedience-Christian will believe himself justified in his behavior. Were not men, women, and children burned formerly because they denied some dogmas? Today, as a matter of fact, these partisans of obedience live, without knowing it, in heresy: they make an arbitrary rule of some religious truths, and exclude all the others that do not suit them.

Nothing is more difficult than to move strict Catholics, who noisily profess their "loyalty to the Church," to a concrete attempt to overcome their national prejudices in favor of European unity. And nothing is more difficult than to bring very honorable Spanish, Irish, South-American, or even Central-European Catholics to renounce feudalistic, late-middle-class, capitalistic, and seignorial privileges. The Bolshevizing of Eastern and Border Europe, the threatening Communist seizure of power in many Latin countries, is conditioned in part by the harshness and rigidity with which these persons defend *their* order, *their* God. And they will enter into any alliances in order to maintain *their* Catholicism as the only legitimate one.

Graham Greene delineates in his Mexican diary, *Lawless Roads*, how the chests with the well-packed papal encyclicals were first freed by the revolution from their imprisonment in episcopal basements. The enthusiasts of church-discipline can't leave immoral movies alone, but they find nothing wrong in overlooking the words of the Pope; their needs direct their selection. It is for the benefit of *his* little sheep that the good-Catholic editor adapts the Christmas message of the Holy Father. How often when quoting from the papal

peace-messages or addresses on current issues we are met with the reproach: "But the Pope surely never said that." Later investigation discloses that most Catholic publications only print texts that are carefully "purged" of "unpleasant" passages. The Pope is accordingly "used" just like the Gospel, only to support our side. Catholics who have been fed this quotation-pabulum are incapable of fundamental encounters with the inner structures of the modern world. Many straightforward Christians can no longer find joy in being obedient, in the living performance of ecclesiastical directions. They feel themselves imposed upon by the drawn-up battle-line of the partisans of obedience, who as from a single mouth call for more and more new papal commands and loudly announce their approval in advance—and then proceed to exploit them or simply to ignore them.

In our time, we see the shipwreck of many performances of obedience as well as the concealment of genuine existential acts of obedience through the façade of a Christianity of yes-men. This proves that the inner dimension of Catholic obedience is often no longer attained either by those who command obedience or those who consent to it. Obedience is a vital relation, which, as Hegel recognized for the first time, fashions even in the feudal world the "master" and the "servant" in their pattern of being. The one demanding obedience and the one performing obedience are fatefully bound to each other. To the weak or even wicked commander of obedience there "corresponds" the man who weakly or hypocritically accepts obedience. The renewal of the life-cells in the earthly body of Christ, in the Church, depends on the rebirth of this primary, creative relation. If cancer is a relaxation of their capacity to breathe, then the invisible cancerous

disease of the Catholic world is the decadence of obedience, the weakening of the inhalation and exhalation, of the commanding and receiving of the living cells, those who command and those who give obedience.

In earlier times of crisis and the turning-points of Church history the necessity of refashioning the relationship of obedience was often clearly recognized. Thus Bernard of Clairvaux composed a *Bischofsspiegel*, a guide of life for prelates, and the great bishop of Geneva, Francis de Sales, thought through anew the executive problems of the bishop's office. The Jesuits saw especially clearly that a new era demanded a new type of bishop. Who was better schooled than they in the spirituality of a new obedience? Their founder, Ignatius Loyola, was the first person in the history of the Church to pledge a great religious society to particular obedience to the Pope—an obedience of a new kind, as the Saint himself proved by wrestling almost twenty years with a pope who resisted him. That was not the obedience of a corpse but instead the waking, alert obedience of a man who knows that he is responsible for the earthly and eternal welfare of his own superior, the one to whom he owes obedience. This special dialectic of Jesuit obedience consciously renewed what had been practiced so naturally since the primitive church, as every process of life unites antithetical elements. Thus a Paul resisted Peter to his face at the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem; thus a Hildegard of Bingen, a Joan of Arc, and many saints of the Middle Ages resisted regulations and commands of their bishops, prelates, and popes. The training of a spirituality of the executive office, to be sure, was attained as rarely as the life of laity was taught as a life in the world (the famous *Imitation of Christ*, along with the *Philothea*, the rule of conduct of a

God-fearing life for five hundred years, taught flight from the world). From the 8th to the 18th century, only works like the *Fürstenspiegel* (a guide-book for princes) attempted to consider Christianly the tasks and problems of a ruling class, but even this restricted itself to models of late antiquity, the age of Constantine. Ruling was, before Luther expressly said so, "a worldly thing"—as so often, he made of a dire necessity a questionable virtue—and that meant for the leaders of the Church a ruling in the customary social and political style of the time.

Right down to our time, not only in Eastern Europe and the two Americas, as far as the experience of the faithful was concerned, the princely sovereignty held the spiritual commanding authority of the "ecclesiastical prince" so closely entwined that a differentiation was scarcely possible. The spirituality of obedience could not flourish in this mixture of worldly and spiritual elements; it remained, like too much of authentic Christianity, something reserved for the orders, for the monastic life. Only there was obedience in its historical and personal problematics experienced intensely; there men learned the secret of history, that from him who takes up his cross flow streams of living water. In the acts of obedience performed in the monasteries of Old Europe, the word of Christ demonstrated its power to create life. With a correct instinct pope, bishop, emperor, and king revered the saintly monk: they knew that they lived from him. The streams of grace, of love, of joy, of hope and peace that flood the warlike millennium of Old Europe come from the wine-press of grief, of renunciation, of performed obedience in the monastic life. In order to comprehend the forces that were here bound and unbound, one must read again what performances of obedience

Teresa of Avila, Juan of Avila, Juan de la Cruz, and many great monk-figures of the sixteenth century took upon themselves. The deep, revolutionary processes in a person were, and are, brought about by *such* acts of obedience. It is important that the conscious work of the great monastic bearers of obedience be revealed to today's Christian. In an un-Christian world, in the dammed-up pressure of the professional and personal life-struggle, he has urgent need of the experience of the genuine, fruitful obedience of these great monks and nuns. The old, monastic asceticism has much to teach to this new discipline of obedience, to the slowly forming asceticism for men who both in the abstaining from the things of the world *and* in their use must learn a comprehensive, spiritual world-responsibility.

But how is the new Catholic obedience won? Recipes cannot be given since it is a question of processes of life, freedom, and responsibility in the concrete historical and personal situation. How much indeed was, and still is, wrongly conducted and wrongly performed in acts of obedience because "examples" are imposed which are misleading in the particular case. The best guide is furnished by the example of those who are already living the new obedience. This means more people than one would think: by men, by women—often married and professional women—and by children. (Our time is an epoch of saintly children and holy child-like people: they alone counteract the increasing childishness of the masses, who demand more, the less they are able and willing to give.) There is one sure sign by which to recognize these new bearers of obedience: their inner freedom and their joy.

Such an obedience overcomes the divisions and schizophrenias from which our times and European Christianity suffer as the heir of Neo-Platonic dreams

and Manichean destructions of the one cosmos. A life in obedience unites first of all those powers and persons, who 19th century Christians felt were separated by chasms: God and world, Lord-God and man-servant, Lord bishop and church sheep, priest and layman.—The new obedience towards God is experienced in the right obedience towards world reality and hence also towards men. Thus we immediately close that chasm which places the priest as overlord in opposition to the layman. The mature man of a candid Catholicity knows himself bound to the hierarchy in an obedience that includes God and world, time and space, in his existence as a member of the great body, the Church, which represents the cosmos appointed for salvation. It was in this way that the Church Fathers experienced it. Only in a life proceeding from this new obedience, open to God and the world, can the prayers be honestly performed to which the Holy Father summons the Christians month after month: to pray, that is, to unite ourselves in spiritual communion, which hopes to produce communication for action, with the clergy of the Philippines, with South American missionaries, etc. If only these prayer-intentions of the Holy Father were intensively fulfilled, a new, all-embracing obedience would inevitably grow up.

This universal obedience unites the mature man, the intelligent woman, and the clear-seeing and precocious child of the present day with the leader of the Church in Christ, lets itself be taught by Him how today the Christian has to bear his cross and the crosses of humanity and of the Church. Immeasurably rich in consequences is the educational effectiveness of *this* obedience; indeed, it trains the commanders of obedience and the bearers of obedience, who are bound to each other in the execu-

tion of obedience, to have a genuine consideration for each other. Today one often gets the impression of exorbitant demands upon those obeying; they are constantly being lectured and commanded as to what film they should see, what book they should read, to what party they should belong, what fashions, what dance, what newspaper they should choose. In strict relation to such excessive demands and regimentation, there is a deep uncertainty on the part of the commanders of obedience, who often do not know what they dare to demand from the layman and the priest; from this we see clearly enough how little both partners have learned the new obedience. To the escapist-positions of the laity and also of the parish priests, who often think they can evade a flood of prescriptions by passive resistance, there correspond the escapist-positions of the episcopacy. Both obeyers and commanders—as the time of National Socialism, among other situations, proves—are unconfessedly in doubt as to how far they can rely upon each other in a grave situation. The bishop doesn't know what he may demand from the people of his diocese in a crisis (it need not only be a question of war or peace, re-armament, or the vital existence of the nation); the layman does not know how far he is obligated by the considerable number of political directives and other statements referring to current issues. Things are not as simple as the conclusion of a respected Catholic newspaper of Northwest Germany tried to make them; after much hesitation, its report on the rightly contested order of the Dutch bishops that the Catholics of Holland could give their vote only to *one* party ended with the suggestion that the Holy Ghost had spoken through the bishops, and hence the matter was settled.

A reborn Catholic obedience does not

experience reality broken up into individual legal acts and juridical decisions, which are "disposed of" by the executions of commands, but instead it knows each concrete summons to obedience as hidden in a responsible personal decision. If a genuine concern of those affected is present (and both partners are always affected), then even from the Church's point of view, they have the duty to continue to champion it. Thomas Aquinas has worked that out impressively enough. Thus in the face of popes and of all Christendom, even great orders like the Jesuits and Dominicans wrestled, for instance, in the quarrel about grace, for their conception of man. The present reveals numerous examples of Catholic resistance *through* obedience, of a Catholic coming-to-grips with ecclesiastical instructions and directions. Noteworthy in this regard is the criticism in the highly conservative London *Tablet* of the address by the Holy Father to midwives, as well as the protest of the same magazine against the Roman prohibition of English Catholic cooperation with the English equivalent to the National Conference of Christians and Jews, when Rome made known no reasons. Let us remember how the resolutions of the first World Lay Congress were placed before the Holy Father in a corrupted form (cf. John M. Todd, "The Apostolate of the Laity," *Cross Currents*, Spring 1952). In the report of *Orientierung* (February 28, 1955), published by Swiss Jesuits, on the condemnation of *Der mündige Christ* [The Christian Comes of Age] by J. Thomé, it is clear that the great anxieties expressed in this book are not done away with by placing the book on the Index. The greatest contemporary example of a charitable wrestling-match with ecclesiastical superiors towards the development of this new Catholic obedience is furnished,

however, by the internal discussions in French Catholicism about the continuation of the priest-workers.

Without so much legitimate resistance, and legitimate objective criticism, the new positive beginnings could not have arisen, much less have matured. Here it must be kept in mind: the phrase "Roma locuta, causa finita" is often improperly interpreted in an extended sense, so as to include all decisions of the Roman curia, whereas, strictly speaking, it refers only to decisions about dogma. Concretely this means that the area of freedom is being realized in the Church by constant revisions of older Roman judgments. Not only the works of Galileo but also leading ones of Catholic piety, such as the *Imitation of Christ*, even an anthology of Catholic mysticism from Tauler to Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, stood for a while, often for centuries, on the Index—not least of all, out of fear of Quietistic and Pietistic "misinterpretation." The struggle for the canonization of Joan of Arc, for the vindication of the ecclesiastical honor of many Jesuits (not only of the last general before the suppression of the Society), recently for the beatification, and then canonization of Savonarola—a series of cardinals and bishops took part in this—then the case of Rosmini, (cf. *Hochland*, April 1954) one of the greatest Catholic thinkers of recent times, and not last, the efforts for the resumption of the trials against the missionaries to China around Ricci condemned three hundred years ago—all these bear impressive testimony to this fact.

In this connection, we may also note the revision and abrogation of the sharp Roman and Papal prohibitions, from the 14th to 19th century, first of a translation of the Bible into the vernacular, then of the breviary into French, for example. The sharp procedure against

more frequent reception of holy communion—reprimanding of pastors, priests, nuns, and laymen took place all over Europe until the liberating decree of Pius X—deserves special attention, since here a vital part of Catholic life is affected. It is not a question of sporadic, individual cases: hundreds of books are removed from the Index, along with corrections of older decisions and judgments, and revisions of Roman and Papal stipulations, especially in reference to world-political attitudes, as the already mentioned case of the bull "Unam sanctam" shows us. Since the height of the 19th century, especially since the pontificate of the canonized Pius X, a process of revision has begun, often scarcely grasped by the Catholic public. These revisions must be understood as an important expression of the growth of the Church and in the Church: knowledge is growing, the conscience is being illuminated, a liberation is taking place from the old anxieties (e.g., towards Protestants, still regarded by Gregory XVIII in 1832 as "devilish"; but greeted by Pius XII in 1939 as "beloved brethren"). All that is unthinkable without the cooperation of the Holy Ghost, who in the progress of the times teaches humanity and the Church much which Christ himself, as he says, did not wish to say to his followers, because they were still too weak, too childish, too ensnared in themselves and too much oppressed with fear. From a human point of view, all this progress is unthinkable without that burden of obedience in resistance, without the patient work of many Catholics who worked to make the "Orthodox" aware of their deficient Catholicity.

Here is the place to remember those not altogether infrequent cases (formerly they were so frequent and self-evident that one did not stress them) in which Catholics because of their Catholic con-

sciences did not obey the political directions of the Holy Father. A. de Bovis compiled, at the 1954 International Catholic Conversations in San Sebastián, a series of such cases, among them one which deserves attention in the German territory. In 1887 Pope Leo XIII asked the German Center Party to vote for the army laws proposed by Bismarck, because the Pope hoped by this means to be able to obtain from Bismarck a revision of anti-Church laws. The *Zentrum* rejected categorically this unreasonable demand of the pope, after which the latter did not insist on it further. Whoever is somewhat familiar with the intimate history of the Christian parties, political movements and leading Christian politicians of the last half-century, knows many examples of a courageous Catholic wrestling with "Rome"—which in some heroic cases reminds one of the meeting of Jacob with the angel (the bishops are called "angels" in early-Christian tradition): "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." In such cases of loving resistance genuine Catholic obedience has borne good fruit, whereas there are known cases of false obedience with bad fruit, when the overzealous appealed to Rome. Even "Rome," even the teaching and commanding office of the Church can have immoderate demands made upon it. That was true, in those cases in which papal encyclicals were built up into ideologies, and used as justifications for whole state-systems; it is true today for those still frequent attempts to prevent the necessary struggle for new structures in the industrial world and by an appeal to the social encyclicals of the last popes. (An eminent specialist like Father Nell-Breuning, S. J., has demonstrated that they merely constitute a social philosophy, they are not applicable as a model to be directly copied.)

What is valid for the performance of genuine obedience towards the pope, is especially true for the performance of obedience towards the bishop. In the concrete Catholic life of the last 150 years, in which the Catholic emperor and king have progressively disappeared as the partner and counter-pole of the bishop, nothing has been more misunderstood than episcopal jurisdiction. Episcopal edicts and proclamations, very often mere expressions of opinion, were considered equal to dogmatic decisions of the highest ecclesiastical teaching-office. The identification of this teaching-office with utterances of the bishop's pastoral office, which have been conditioned by temporal factors, has contributed much to the replacing of spiritual obedience by a political, external obedience. Since the episcopal administration of a diocese is quite involved in the temptations, dangers, and risks of the concrete historical situation, there are, naturally, many possible complications.

How different is the Catholic obedience which assumes a joint responsibility for the whole Church by championing the concerns of its conscience until they find fulfillment in the life-process of the Church. To the exercise of this obedience belongs a very great significance. The anxiety, narrowness, and uncertainty of our time, its tendency to bureaucracy and the temptation to misunderstand the Church as an insurance-agency, entail the danger that decisions will be reached prematurely, before what is at stake has been realized and fought out. Nothing is a greater danger to the fullness of love and life in the Church than the constricting sclerosis that follows a premature settling of controversies, in the fear that they might result in "complications." The life of the Church is realized in these very "complications." It is understandable that quite a few church-leaders since the days

of the Reformation have observed the ways of laymen with worry and distrust. The new obedience can be won, however, only by a new trust. This present-day, necessary rebirth of obedience in the Catholic world—which alone can disarm the gossip about clerical-fascism and the harsh reproach that Catholicism in its innermost structure is related to the great counter-church of the Kremlin—obligates both partners to a new spiritual discipline of obedience. For those who command, this presupposes a frugal and, at the same time, decisive use of their authority of command. Training of conscience is only possible when an inner acceptance of ecclesiastical instructions can be attained through a personal decision in obedience:

"THE RESPONSIBILITY of the one obeying is such a primary factor that it immediately and unhesitatingly challenges the absolute responsibility of the commander to the one obeying. And the gesture of trust of a subordinate laden with responsibility, who offers his person to a superior in obedience to God, calls for the personal response of the superior. It is absolutely impossible that a personal relationship of obedience should remain one-sided, that is, be answered by the superior merely officially and impersonally, according to administrative practices. The man who obeys surrenders his person, and this is something so unheard of, that such exposure—like that of Saint Francis on the square of Assisi—must be enveloped at once by the cloak of the personal love of the superior. In other words: no relationship, no matter how official, can do away with the necessity of love. No superior in the Church may demand love merely because of his official position, and obedience is always love! If he is not willing,

according to the measure of his powers, to render a personal, Christian love in return and yet makes this demand, he becomes guilty towards the loving man who obeys him." (Hans Urs v. Balthasar, *Bernanos*).

THE COMMANDER OF OBEDIENCE must at all times be aware that, if as the vicar of Christ, as a bishop, he obligates in obedience, he obligates on the cross. The Catholic Christian—and this is often overlooked by both partners—has only *one* possibility of asserting himself in the most ultimate matters against his superiors: by means of the cross, by taking it upon himself and by bringing his cause to complete ripeness through his own death. Great witnesses to obedience like a Francis, a Teresa and a Thérèse, an Ignatius, create new areas of freedom, new areas of life in the Church. The stronger, the more vigorous their personality is, the deeper they must enter into the winepress of suffering. The growth of the body of Christ on earth is bound to the cross, even to the bearing of the cross in the Church. Let us not deceive ourselves: the rebirth of Catholic obedience, as an unlocking of the deepest potential, of the powers of salvation, will have to start again and again in this first and last dimension of Christian existence in time and space.

The descent into this last depth, however, is only granted, if those who give orders and those who obey them wrestle honestly and patiently for genuine decisions and instructions. Here is valid what Carlos de Santamaria adheres to in his Introduction to his edition of the *International Conversations in San Sebastia in 1954 Concerning Obedience and Freedom of Catholics*: there is often need of genuine heroism to perform obedience in resistance: "I have said heroism, for non-obedience is in general more difficult than obedience."

This "non-obedience" must be properly understood aright: "The Christian always obeys, and if frequently according to appearances he does not obey, then he does so in order to obey a higher power." As Pater Taymans maintains, "disobedience" proceeding from the innermost duty of conscience is nothing else than a higher form of obedience.

If, therefore, the precious seed of genuine Catholic obedience is to bear fruit tomorrow in mature Catholics who carry out responsibility for the Church in the one world—as individual fighters cut off from the ecclesiastical general staffs—then the eyes and the senses of those who command and those who obey must be trained in the discernment of spirits and of the Spirit. It is apparent today that a new obedience is everywhere being lived—often by borderline cases and even "black sheep," by humiliated sons and daughters, who in the hour of testing prove to be the most loyal members of the Church. The birth of joy and freedom in the Church, are fruits of this new Catholic obedience, whose attainment is the finest, most delicate task of a manly life. This birth of joy and freedom presupposes, however, a change of climate in Christendom, in the ecclesiastical organizations. In this, there is no sheep-like obedience, but the leaders of the Church calmly and joyfully encounter the men to whom they are to announce the glad tidings of the freedom of the children of God.

Pius XII asks for this new climate of trust in his letter to the president of the Semaine Sociale in 1954: "May it please God that from now on the one commanding and the one obeying shall have nothing else in view than obedience to the eternal laws of truth and justice!"

translated by DR. JOHN AMBROSE HESS

THE MISSION OF CATHOLIC ECUMENICISM

JEROME HAMER

ECUMENICISM, seen in all of its fullness is a complex reality, at once theological and pastoral.¹ Since a balanced apostolic effort can only be a putting into operation of doctrinal norms in contact with experience, it is to the first aspect of the problem that we shall devote our attention. Ecumenicism is, above all, a question of religious thought.

In its efforts toward unity, ecumenicism can neglect none of the Christian confessions. A complete exposition would postulate, consequently, an equal attention accorded to orthodoxy, to Anglicanism and to Protestantism. In this article we shall limit ourselves to Protestantism; however, the principles studied here are of universal value and apply, by analogy, to the other groups.

On the level of doctrine another distinction becomes evident. On this plane alone the problem presents more than one aspect, as we shall have occasion to recall toward the end of our exposition. Wishing to treat only the essential in the space at our disposal, we shall attempt to answer the following question: *why and how are the doctrinal positions of our separated brethren to be studied from an ecumenical point of view?*

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The study of Protestantism must take place at first within the framework of a comparative history of Christian confessions. If we are to accomplish that, it is not enough to set up two parallel columns, and place the affirmations of the Catholic magisterium on one side, and those of the Protestant confessions of faith on the other. Catholicism and Protestantism are, above all else, facts. They are not to be exhausted by notional affirmations. A religion is not only a doctrine, but a way of life more or less conforming to this doctrine. Furthermore, a thorough study of the Christian confessions supposes a patient analysis of the different elements which compose these religious complexities in order to perceive ultimately their respective principles of unity and cohesion.

Applied to Catholicism, this method would consider not only the normative teaching of the Church, but also all the concrete manifestations of life brought into being or recognized by it. Theological thought would certainly occupy an important place here with a rapid survey of the schools and of the great controversial questions. This aspect of the life of the Church would be completed by other areas no less important: the liturgy, the concrete forms of spirituality, the current devotions accepted by ecclesiastical authority, the modern forms of the apostolate, ecclesiastical discipline. The implications of these diverse factors would have to be studied in those basic groups which are, so to speak, the cells of the Church: the parish, the religious community. It goes without saying that from such a perspective a study of great saints and of the principal mystics would be a necessity.

It is in fact in the saints and mystics that Catholicism manifests itself most perfectly, without, however, expressing itself in a uniform fashion.

A method as supple and as patient is called for even more where the normative element imposes itself less. The prestige of doctrinal affirmations is great in Protestantism, but the interest one brings to them can vary from simple respect for a venerable document to an almost unconditioned adherence. Furthermore, it must be recognized that the most orthodox Protestant theology has never accorded to declarations of faith an authority equal to that which we recognize in our Councils. The role and influence of theological teaching will therefore be ultimately greater than in the Catholic Church, and a corresponding place will have to be granted it in any study which wishes to take into consideration the balance of the various elements. Under many aspects the "doctor" assumes in Protestantism many of the functions reserved by us to the teaching authority. One would, however, be mistaken in believing that this academic aspect of Protestantism finds, *ipso facto*, its parallel in the Protestantism of the faithful. There is more Protestant tradition in the parishes than in university faculties. The concrete forms of worship submit in only a watered down fashion to the reactions of the theological movement. Certain orientations of thought, moreover, reveal themselves sooner or later as incompatible with the life of a parish. More than one liberal pastor has returned to a more positive Christianity through contact with his faithful. One can see from this the importance of studying the current Protestant catechism, as well as Protestant chant. Hymns occupy an important place in worship. Accessible to all, they provide a living commentary on the Bible and a resumé of teaching.

Room must also be found for biographies and autobiographies. An account of John Wesley's life will enable us to understand Methodism far better than numerous works on the subject.

Based on the unity of each complex confession, this method is not new. The first Catholic theologian to have applied it to the doctrinal differences between Catholicism and Protestantism is Jean-Adam Möhler in his *Symbolique* (1832). Inspired by Marheinecke, the author of *Symbolique* adopts a method at once comparative and organic. It is not enough (as Möhler reproaches Winer for having done) to stress the resemblances and the differences; one must go more profoundly into the matter and demonstrate how the two confessions are opposed as "two living irreducibles" while at the same time extricating the central idea in each case.

This insistence on the perception of the totality distinguishes Möhler from his predecessors. Before him the study of Protestantism had followed along the lines of the *Controversies* of Bellarmine. This work, the fruit of a course taught at the Roman College from 1576 to 1588 and published under the title *Disputationes de controversiis christianae fidei adversus hujus temporis haereticos* (from 1586 to 1593), follows the thought of the dissenters in the details of their affirmations without rising to a consideration of the whole as such. On each point Bellarmine states the errors of the heretics, the positions of the Catholic theologians and the doctrine of the Church; then he gives himself over to a minute argumentation, in the style of his age, supported by Scripture, the Councils, the Fathers and the consent of the theologians. This analytical work is absolutely indispensable: without a study which follows the progress of thought, one cannot arrive at an awareness of the living synthesis. The discovery and the intel-

lectual elaboration of this synthesis is precisely the ambition of J. A. Möhler. The oppositions to this or that article of faith are not simple, local guerrilla actions, but rather movements which respond to a strategy of the whole, a strategy inspired by an organized thought. *Symbolique* took upon itself the task of extricating these internal necessities.

One will doubtlessly question more than one of Möhler's conclusions; one might find a particular trait is over-emphasized; one might even criticize a care for systematisation which is pushed too far and in which one senses the influence of German idealism; but it is certain that the attention devoted to the whole represents notable progress in the study of Christian confessions and a useful complement to the method hitherto employed. Let us note, nonetheless, that Möhler's documentation remains still too limited. If his method is organic, it is not as yet global. If it studies the confession as a whole, it still is not moved by all the manifestations of this whole to perceive profound unity in it. Möhler in fact takes as the basis for his study only the avowals of faith. What he is seeking is any official doctrine which might have received a formal and public sanction. His reserve is great even with regard to the writings of the Reformers, whose opinions he presents only insofar as they have received an official consecration. This excessively reduced basis for examination will certainly yield to Möhler an excellent knowledge of Protestantism insofar as it depends upon these doctrinal pronouncements, but it will not permit him to attain to the totality of the Protestant phenomenon. His controversies with Ferdinand Christian Baur reveal the major role that must be given to theology and the theologians if one wishes to include modern Protestantism in a study of Protestantism as such. The experience of phenomenol-

ogy, in the widest sense of this word, invites us to go further still and to study everything that can teach us something about the profound nature of that dynamic whole known as a religious confession.

This total method would not be faithful to the given if it contented itself with demonstrating that the religious life expresses itself through particular manifestations which pertain to those irreducible organisms; one must still emphasize everything which is held in common. The rupture in the sixteenth century did not carry over into the entire body of articles of faith: a vast domain has remained beyond the area of controversy. Assuredly the interior dialectic of Protestantism has involved on more than one occasion that common heritage to which the Reformers were firmly clinging, but it is clear that in the degree to which the Protestant is faithful to his origins, in the same degree does he remain attached to these goods. The compiling of a precise and detailed inventory belongs then to the exigencies of that method whose advantages we are stressing here. The homogeneity of the Catholic and of the Protestant totalities demonstrates, moreover, how much these common elements have been conditioned by the laws of the living organism in which they are inserted.

A CLEAR VIEW of what has remained common and of that which is divisive will be, therefore, the point at issue in a comparative study of the Christian confessions conducted according to the demands of this total method. Such a contribution is valuable both for the theologian and for the apostle, each of whom can begin his respective task only after having acquired a perfect understanding of it. The theological dialogue and the apostolic effort would be fruitless if one were to ignore the speakers to

whom one is addressing oneself. Still this work, so difficult and so delicate, is nothing more than a preliminary. Theology will see in it only the work of an auxiliary science: this is but the *donnée* of the problem, already elaborated in order to make clear the breadth of its scope, but to which no value judgment has been applied. But the whole attention of the theologian and of the apostle is focused upon this value judgment. It is important, consequently, that we go one step further and pose the question: what is the respective importance of the common elements and of the whole?

Certain minds, attracted by the importance of those common elements, have a tendency to stress their value at the expense of the whole and to consider explicitly or tacitly that which separates as secondary.

The placing of undue value on the common elements at the expense of the aggregate does not take sufficient account of religious history. It is not because there is agreement on certain points that they acquire a doctrinal importance greater than those points on which such an agreement cannot be envisaged. Historically the splits within Christianity are to be explained by a reason quite the opposite of this. It is precisely because the subjects of controversy were so important that Protestants and Catholics formulated, in the sixteenth century, their rigorous *non possumus*. Although to a lesser degree, there is, I believe, something of a similar nature to be seen in the great divisions which separate the other Christian sects from each other. Insofar as they have remained faithful to the position of the Wittenberg reformer, the Lutherans are in no way disposed to regard their Eucharistic doctrine as secondary. And Anglicanism, on its side, finds itself involved in difficult problems each time that any of the reconciliations which

they envisage touch upon the "historical episcopacy," considered as one of the four points of the Lambeth Quadrilateral (1920).

The Catholic theologian, considering this problem from an ecumenical perspective, will not stress the common elements *at the expense* of the respective wholes, but will, on the contrary, emphasize the part *as a function* of the whole. The articles of faith which make up this portion of the heritage, far from being shut in upon themselves, issue a summons from all sides for a vital connection with the rest of the organism. The role of the theologian is, consequently, to take as his basis those points which are held in common in order to proceed toward the totality, the sole authentic totality.

This needs some explanation. Confronted, right in the middle of the thirteenth century, by the exigencies of the dialogue with the adversary, St. Thomas supplies us with the principles for such an approach. Let us note, in the first place, that St. Thomas was concerned with urging the dialogue. Hence his first preoccupation was to clear a common ground, "more and more reduced and feeble, if necessary, provided that it be common."² This theological method corresponded to a new situation. The time of the Crusades had passed; that of the peaceful encounter was at hand. In Spain the Moors were relaxing their grip, and were thus making possible a penetration other than that of conquest. The way was now clear for an apologetic dialogue, the essential means of a new missionary attitude.³

The necessity for producing a work of erudition in order to become acquainted with the interlocutor then imposed itself:

The new conditions lead, Christians to found schools of language for the dialogue, instead of arming knights

for war. The mendicants are the leaders of this new missionary type.⁴

In the Dominican Order one can follow by means of documents the efforts expanded for the founding of a *studium arabicum*, the opening of which was announced by a letter from Raymond de Penafort to the Master General after the chapter of Valenciennes in 1259. The missionary is no longer the one who, in the wake of a victorious army and aided by all the prestige of the conqueror, preaches a Christianity which presents itself as all of one piece. Henceforth he will address himself to cultivated speakers in a dialogue, the heirs of an extremely rich civilization, interlocutors whom he must now persuade patiently. It is by taking as his point of departure everything which is positive in them that he will lead them to the faith.

St. Thomas' method is careful to make progressively available an access to the Christian fullness, while taking his point of departure from the very heart of the thought of the one he is seeking to convince. When the discussion bears on the existence of a truth,

one must have recourse to the *authorities* who are recognized and accepted by those with whom the controversy has been undertaken. In the case of a discussion with the Jews, it is important to take as one's basis the *authorities* of the Old Testament. In the case of a controversy with the Manicheans, who reject the Old Testament, one will limit himself to the *authorities* of the New Testament. With schismatics, such as the Greeks, who recognize both the Old and the New, without accepting the doctrine of our *sancti*, one will take as his support the *authorities* of both Testaments and the doctors accepted by them.⁵

St. Thomas surely does not conceive of the possibility that one might simply, *a priori* and *per viam demonstrationis*,

deduce all of the articles of faith from one another. That would render the revelation of the New Testament superfluous with regard to that of the Old. According to the thought of St. Thomas, revelation once having been achieved, and taking account of the statement of dogmas made by the Church, the theologian must be in a position to demonstrate how the articles of faith are implicitly contained in certain major articles. The role of the theologian is, consequently, to reveal this conformity between the whole development of revelation and the subsequent progress of dogma, and its great previous stages. He will do this by discursive activities at the heart of which, aside from the syllogism of necessity, a very large place will be given over to the argument of suitability.⁶ "The new law is compared to the old as the perfect to the imperfect... The new law is therefore contained in the old as the grain in the ear of corn."⁷ This dialectic of the perfect and the imperfect traces the theologian's line of procedure, utilising all the resources and all of the most delicate nuances of the discursive understanding.

The articles of faith bear within themselves their future development, their sole authentic progress. They are not small inert blocks which one can, according to his fancy, arrange in such or such a pattern. It is that, above all, which is important for our present purpose. In gestation, within every article of faith, there is a dynamism of plenitude which the theologian must unleash. For this reason Catholic thought must keep its eyes continually fixed on those positive truths which have been preserved in the dissenting confessions. The very existence of these beliefs outside of the visible communion of the Church answers to some mysterious disposition of a Providence which main-

tains within separated groups the seeds of unity.

In our theological justification of the ecumenical effort we have sought in St. Thomas the necessary arguments for establishing solidly a work so new in appearance and yet so profoundly traditional in the apostolate of the Church. But we would like to note in addition that an investigation made in the bosom of the Ecumenical Council and fixed in a document of its Central Committee assembled at Toronto in 1950 re-enforces our own conclusions on more than one point. Here are the passages to which we allude:

It is taught generally in the different Churches that the others possess certain elements of the true Church, designated in certain confessions '*vestigia ecclesiae*.' . . . The ecumenical movement rests on the conviction that one must follow these 'trails.' . . . Far from scorning them as being only elements of the truth, the Churches ought to rejoice and see in them signs of hope, marking the path toward a true unity. What, in fact, are these elements? Not dead remnants of the past, but powerful means which God utilises for his work.⁸

The document continues by pointing out that the reservations to be made concerning the purity of the elements which have been maintained in these conditions must not cause us to forget that they contain a great hope and a great appeal for the fullness of truth. For our part we would wish simply to raise again here two convergences with the position noted above: first, that outside of the confessional frontiers there can exist common elements, and secondly, that these common elements ought to be utilised as means toward genuine unity.

WHAT ARE these common elements? Let us exclude from the first the *principles peculiar* to Protestantism.

When one considers with some attention the unity of the specifically Protestant experience, it would no longer appear possible to break down this unique intuition into a double vision of which one part would embrace an authentically Christian truth while the other would be borne along on an error which deforms it. The Lutheran doctrine of justification is not the juxtaposition of the gratuitousness of God's grace and the forensic manner of presentation. These two aspects, inseparable as they are, mutually define themselves. The root idea of Protestantism, although complex, is unique. One can break it down only by destroying the historical reality. The formally Protestant experience is homogeneous. It is not the addition of a truth and its deformation, but the intuition of a deformed truth.

It is undeniably true that the Reformers underwent authentic Christian experiences on either side of the rupture, either before or after separation. But these experiences do not belong properly to the Reformation. They are independent of its fundamental principles. They are authentic insofar as they have been preserved along with the first intuition of the religious split. Likewise, Protestant inheritors of the Lutheran patrimony

can certainly possess authentic Christian values, but the purity of these values will be compromised by them to the precise degree that, in formulating or in living them, they undergo the vertigo of the original Lutheran experience.⁹

Their integrity will be protected, on the contrary, in the degree to which the Holy Spirit frees them from this influence. As J. A. Möhler has, quite rightly, written: "That which heresy thinks to achieve with the halo of its fundamental principles will always be outside of Christianity."¹⁰

The fundamental principles are,

therefore, not the whole of concrete Protestantism. The split is maintained only on certain principal dogmas. The rest has remained common. As a form of religious life, Protestantism is not therefore to be summed up in a pure negation. Totally destitute of that which is Christian, heresy "would no longer be a heresy, it would no longer have to be viewed along with Christianity and one would find no trace of it in the history of the Church."¹¹ Consequently, it is important to distinguish that we have before our eyes in concrete Protestantism the very principles of the Reformation and the common elements of the single Christian tradition. In adopting this vocabulary—a distinction between "principles" and "elements"—I am following J. A. Möhler, who, in my opinion, has not been surpassed by any one on this point. In addition to characteristic principles, such as the Lutheran doctrine of justification, or the Barthian idea of a transcendence of divine holiness cut off from all real communication, one must recognize an important group of authentic Christian truths which the Reformation was incapable of denying.

At the very moment of the Reformation, the domain reserved for these values was very extensive. Its extension today will depend on the degree of faithfulness to the Reformation. It is necessary to make a judgment in each case. These common elements will have to be investigated on two levels: that of reality and that of belief. On the first, the existence of a valid Baptism in numerous dissident confessions will certainly be the principal element to be considered. On the second level, attention will above all be directed to the divinity of Christ, the Redemption wrought on the Cross, the divine authority of the Scriptures and the unity of the Church.

The 163 churches belonging to the Ecumenical Council have adopted as the basis for their collaboration "Our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior." This fact demonstrates the importance of the Incarnation in the ecumenical dialogue.¹² The Catholic theologian will center his attention on this point. Starting with that, he will be able to study all the implications of this fundamental affirmation. Another privileged point of departure of the ecumenical dialogue will be the Church. The very existence of the Ecumenical Council bears witness to the immense interest which is everywhere given to this question. In the *Declaration of Toronto* it is stated:

The member Churches of the Council are supported by the New Testament in affirming that the Church of Christ is one. The ecumenical movement owes its existence to the fact that this article of faith was imposed with an irresistible strength on believers, men and women, in a large number of Churches. They are seized by a holy indignation when they state this contrast: in truth there is not and there cannot be but one Church; in fact, there do exist multiple Churches which all declare themselves to be the Church of Christ, but they do not exist in a state of living unity among themselves.¹³

Among the common elements, the Incarnation of Christ and the unity of the Church present themselves, consequently, in a quite special fashion to the ecumenical consideration. It is here that the debate can be most fruitful, at least in the immediate present.

In order to give to this problem of the common points its exact countenance, two things must still be pointed out. The first is that these elements bear the mark of the syntheses which contain them. This has been clearly emphasized in the report of the first section (The Universal Church in the Design of God) at the Amsterdam Assem-

bly. It is known that this first assembly of the Ecumenical Council did, above all else, ascertain a fundamental disagreement between two groups: the one designated "Catholicism," the other "Protestantism"—an opposition which a Protestant theologian has expressed in the formula: *The institution and the event*, which has become current in theological circles.¹⁴ The reason for this opposition between blocs was given in the following terms: "On both sides of the fence, the faith and the Christian life are considered as a coherent whole." In each case one

considers the diverse elements in the life of the Church from the point of view of the whole, in such a way that, even where these elements appear to be similar, they are, in reality, found to be situated in a general context which, up to the present . . . appears to be irreducible in terms of its relationship to the other whole.¹⁵

This impregnation of the part by the whole has been observed in connection with Christology. The Reformers and the great Protestant theologians have subscribed like ourselves to the faith of the Council of Chalcedon (451): Christ is one and the same person in two distinct natures. "In agreement on the dogmatic formulation of the mystery of the Incarnation, are we completely agreed on its meaning?"¹⁶ One has one's doubts. In an interesting page, Father Congar sees a sign of it in the fact that Chalcedon is the last Council on which the heirs of the Reformation are in agreement with us. But the list of Christological Councils does not end with Chalcedon.

The Anglicans are an exception and go along with us as far as the sixth Ecumenical Council held at Constantinople in 680-1 in order to eliminate an error concerning Christ, the one which denies that He possessed a human will.

It is, however, with the Orthodox Church alone that we go as far as the seventh Council, held at Nice in 787, the object of which was the legitimacy of image worship. The question of iconoclasm is far from being perfectly clarified, but there is general agreement "in seeing in the quarrel concerning images a quarrel relevant to Christological doctrines."¹⁷ It is the Incarnation of Christ, the appearance of God in visible human flesh which justifies a less literal interpretation of the Mosaic commandment: "Thou shalt not make any carven image, nor any figure . . ." It is therefore with the separated Eastern Churches alone that we hold the totality of the Christological dogma.

This is not the place for us to ask why the adhesion is thus limited. Let it suffice for us to remark how much all of this confirms what we have pointed out at the beginning. The Christian confessions are not aggregates of beliefs and of practices. They are living organisms, as unified in themselves as they are distinct from each other. Each time that an appeal is made to one of these common elements, before taking support from it, it will be necessary to give it its proper dimension. That will frequently require a redress, a purification, but never an amputation or a diminishing, for we are in the presence here of authentic Christian values.¹⁸

The second remark which remains to be made concerns the role to be played by the study of liberalism within an ecumenical framework. At first glance one does not see what a study of this kind can contribute to a knowledge of the common points, since liberalism generally affirms itself in the denial of these points. The divinity of Christ and the divine authority of Scripture are, for example, incompatible with the liberal point of view. Must one therefore consider the study of the thought of a

neo-liberal like Rudolf Bultmann to be superfluous? I do not think so, for two reasons. First, because liberalism does not always coincide with rationalism pure and simple. Paradoxically, one occasionally discovers in it one or another of the themes of revelation, which is sustained as though by a thread. Thus we find in Bultmann a certain idea—quite vague in other respects—of grace, of the gratuitousness of the forgiveness of sins.¹⁹ Since Ecumenicism must be attentive to every religious value, howsoever diminutive it may be, why should it neglect this? The other reason, more general, is the place of liberalism at the heart of Protestantism. Liberalism, the interior movement of which inclines toward humanism pure and simple, is a real possibility in the very interior of Protestantism. It is one of its limitations. It poses, therefore, a constant threat to the positive values which Protestantism has preserved and to which the faithful rightfully adhere. A study of the old and the recent forms of liberalism demonstrates how defenseless Protestantism is in the face of such a danger. The sole effective protection would be another conception of doctrinal authority in the Christian community. But such a conception is incompatible with the very principles of the Reformation.

THE PAGES WHICH PRECEDE have, it seems, sufficiently described a way of conceiving the work of the theologian and the pastoral care of the apostle in matters ecumenical. I am anxious to emphasize once again that this is only one aspect of a very complex problem. Ecumenicism has a vast domain. It is not only a question of directing toward the fullness of the Church the positive values, the good things discovered beyond its visible frontiers. It is still necessary to place the Church's theology within reach of our separated brothers.

Our theology, so limpid in our eyes, would appear to those who have not received our formation, who do not live in a Catholic milieu, as a body of doctrine to which access is not easy. It belongs to ecumenicism to furnish the thread of Ariadne, by revealing in Catholic theology an answer to the questions of the dissenters. That presupposes as well that one breaks down the wall of prejudice which in the confessional controversy conceals the true dimensions of the separation.

Let us note further, for the sake of completeness, that outside of ecumenicism properly so called, there is something else which is no less important. In addition to activities admittedly ecumenical in aim, there are activities which pursue other goals, but which have large implications. All work that is serious, objective and profound within the ecclesiastical domain has such implications. I am thinking, for example, of ecclesiastical history and of the Biblical and liturgical revival. When we shall have demonstrated to the Protestants that our interest in the word of God is not less than theirs, we may well have done more for unity than all of the formal endeavors of organized ecumenicism.

The present article has grappled with only one of the activities of ecumenicism, but it is an important activity. For purposes of summing up, I would simply like to formulate two theses:

1. With respect for all of the facts, careful to appreciate all of the religious values, regardless of their source, with justice and sympathy, the theologian will have as his role the restoration of all of the goods of the Church which have been preserved outside of its visible communion and will base his efforts toward unity upon their internal dynamism.

2. He will demonstrate that these

good things can be made complete and led to their perfection only in the Church, which is, moreover, their only true safeguard.

translated by JAMES E. GREENE

NOTES

¹ Documents of the Holy See on the Unity of Christians: The most important one on the ecumenical movement is without a doubt the *Instructions to Ordinaries on the Ecumenical Movement*, published by the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office. The text, which was signed and dated September 1949, appeared in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* only on January 31, 1950 (pp. 142 ff.). A French translation of it may be found in *La Documentation catholique*, n. 1064, March 12, 1950. Among the previous documents on unity the principal ones are the encyclical *Satis Cognitum* of Leo XIII (*Leonis XIII Acta*, Rome, 1897, pp. 157 ff.), the letter of the Holy Office to the Puseyists (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 1919, pp. 312 ff.), the encyclical *Mortalium animos* of Pius XI (*Acta . . .*, 1928, pp. 5 ff.) and that of Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis* (*Acta . . .*, 1943, pp. 193 ff.). For the history of this question one might refer to the work of Roger Aubert: *Le Saint-Siège et l'Union des Eglises* (Chrétienté nouvelle), Brussels, Editions Universitaires, 1946.

² M. D. Chenu, *Introduction à l'étude de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Université de Montréal. Publications de l'institut d'études médiévales, XI), Montréal and Paris, 1954, page 254.

³ M. D. Chenu, *Introduction . . .*, page 249.

⁴ M. D. Chenu, *Introduction . . .*, page 253.

⁵ Quodl. IV, art. 18. The *Sancti* correspond to the Fathers of the Church.

⁶ M. D. Chenu, *Introduction . . .*, pages 151, 252, 263.

⁷ *Summa Theol.*, Ia, IIae., p. 107, art. 3, c.

⁸ *Déclaration de Toronto*, IV, 5. The official text of this declaration bears the following title: *The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches. The Ecclesiological Significance of the World Council of Churches*. The English text appeared in *Minutes and Reports of the Third Meeting of the Central Committee*: Toronto, 9-15 July 1950, Genève, pp. 84-90.

⁹ Ch. Journet, *L'Eglise du Verbe Incarné*, Vol. I, Bruges and Paris, 1941, p. 57. "It would be a question, for our separated brothers, of renouncing not the values proper to their Christianity, with its Slavic value for example, but of renouncing only whatever sets up blocs of particularist and sectarian feelings, of errors or of limitations, of insufficiencies or of weaknesses. It would be a question of renouncing not their religious values as real and positive values, but only as separated; of renouncing whatever, in their separated state, they possess of the false, the distorted, the precarious; of renouncing the mixture of errors which renders them, such as they are, unable to be assimilated into the Body of Christ." (Yves M. J. Congar, *Chrétiens désunis* (Unam Sanctam), Paris, 1937, p. 322).

¹⁰ J. A. Möhler, *L'unité dans l'Eglise ou le principe du catholicisme* (Unam Sanctam, 2), transl. by Dom A. Lilienfeld, Paris, 1938, page 103.

¹¹ J. A. Möhler, *L'Unité . . .* page 105.

¹² Here is the text of the agreed-upon basis: "The Ecumenical Council of Churches is a fraternal as-

sociation of Churches which accept Our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior." This text is the first article of the Constitution of the Ecumenical Council of Churches, adopted by the Assembly of Amsterdam on August 30, 1948. Without being a profession of faith, it is more than a formula of agreement. The life and the activity of the Ecumenical Council rests on it. Yet the Ecumenical Council of Churches "would go beyond the limits which it imposed upon itself if it attempted to pass judgment on whether a Church takes this basis sufficiently seriously. That question remains within the competence of the Church itself, which must decide for itself if it can in all sincerity accept the basis of the Ecumenical Council." (*Manuel de l'Assemblée*, Evanston 1954, reedited in view of the second assembly of the Ecumenical Council of Churches, Geneva 1954, p. 14). This reservation is important. It shows on the one hand that the Ecumenical Council, which refuses to be either a Church or a super-Church, can assume the role of teacher, and, on the other hand, that the interpretation of the declaration concerning the common basis is left entirely up to the judgment of the Churches.

¹³ *Déclaration de Toronto*, IV, 2.

¹⁴ Jean-Louis Leuba, professor of systematic theology at the University of Neuchâtel has published *L'Institution et l'événement*, a work which has been widely discussed in Protestant circles. Leuba is seeking to free himself from a narrow Barthism; his position seems to us now to be closer to Calvin than to Karl Barth. Cf. J. Hamer, *Une théologie du dualisme chrétien*, in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 1951, pages 275-281.

¹⁵ *Man's Disorder* (Documents of the Amsterdam Assembly. Ecumenical studies prepared under the auspices of the Ecumenical Council of Churches), vol. I, *L'Eglise universelle dans le dessein de Dieu*, Neuchâtel and Paris, 1949, pages 304-306. A note on page 305 states: "By *Catholicism* we do not designate only Roman Catholicism," and adds: "The word *Protestant*, throughout the greater part of Europe, is rendered by the word *Evangelical*." This enlarged usage of the word *Catholicism* is common in non-Roman Ecumenical circles. In the text of the conclusions cited above, the italics are ours.

¹⁶ Yves M. J. Congar, *Le Christ, Marie et l'Eglise*, Bruges and Paris, 1952, p. 31.

¹⁷ Yves M. J. Congar, *Le Christ . . .*, page 30.

¹⁸ "One can without doubt say to them (the separated Christians) that in returning to the Church they will lose nothing of the good which, by the grace of God, has been realized in them up to the present moment, but that by their return *this good will be only fulfilled and brought to its perfection*. One will, however, avoid discussing this point in such a manner that, by returning to the Church, they would think of themselves as bringing to the Church an *essential* element which would be otherwise lacking to it. These things must be said to them clearly and without ambiguity, first of all because they are seeking the truth, and secondly because outside of the truth there can never be any true union." (*Instruction . . . sur le Mouvement oecuménique*, II, in *La Documentation catholique*, Loc. Cit. (see note 1), col. 332). The italics have been added by us.

¹⁹ On this point, I would make a clear distinction between the liberalism of a Bultmann and that of a Fritz Buri. The latter pushes radical liberalism as far as it can possibly go.

THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PAUL TILlich

GUSTAVE WEIGEL

IN OUR TIME the Atlantic Ocean is only a slight barrier between Europe and the Americas. Yet as a symbol of intellectual separation it is more eloquent. This does not mean that the world-views are specifically different, but it does mean that the Americas cannot be considered as mere subsumptions of Europe. A greater category than Europe must be used to indicate the union, and the greater classification is the West.

The contributions of the Americas to the theological tradition of the West have not been startling and they have usually been not too significant local modifications of European ideas. This was discouragingly true for the American Catholic theologians, either of the northern or southern hemisphere, and it was only less true for the Protestant divines.

In Paul Tillich this condition has ended. He was born in Brandenburg in 1886 and was educated in the German universities. His early academic career was set against the German scene; but since 1933 he has been in America at the Union Theological Seminary of New York (from September 1955 his work continues at the Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts).

Professor Tillich is a Westerner rather than a European or an American. His native soil was Europe, and he has re-

turned to England and to the Continent frequently since he originally left Germany. His home, however, is America and he has learned much from the new country of which he is a citizen.

This man is most significant for theology in the contemporary West. It can be maintained without rashness that he is the most impressive figure in today's Protestant theology, which is distinguished by many great names both in Europe and America. It is high time that Catholic theologians knew Tillich's work better and studied it more.

Professor Tillich is almost seventy years old and his theology has been evolving during the last thirty-five years. His later works clarify earlier positions and every new article or volume helps the reader to understand better the achievements and orientation Tillich adopted years ago. He makes progress by deepening his own thought and rendering it clearer to himself and others.

Wherein lies the importance of Tillich? In the fact that he has made an all-embracing system of Protestant thought and doctrine. This synthesis is not merely a free construction involving the rejection of some unloved tendencies. He is really bringing together all the elements of Protestant thinking from the days of the reformers to our own time. What is more, this synthesis takes into consideration the Catholic elements which are latent in Protestant belief, though often unrecognized. A unified rational synthesis of the diverse and seemingly contradictory stands and tenets of the Reform tradition in its life of four centuries is a major event. Has anyone ever attempted it before? Others produce a personal synthesis, leaving

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out of it the elements of Protestantism which are not congenial to them. But Tillich has the courage and the knowledge to bring in all the movements of Protestant reality, past and present.

Secondly, Tillich has achieved his system in the only way it could be realized. He takes an ontological approach to his task. He knows history well, but in his theology he deliberately follows the light of ontology. This is undoubtedly a new note in recent Protestant theology. Tillich's ontology is neither Platonic nor Scholastic; it is existentialist, but it is a formal ontology and it is chosen deliberately and consciously.

Thirdly, Tillich is original. He is indebted to many theologians: Kähler, Barth, Niebuhr and others. However, he is not the follower of any one man. He embraces positions which are typical of other theologians but his stand is bigger and frequently not to the taste of the theologians whose thought he has absorbed.

Professor Tillich lectures often and publishes much. It would take more than an article to go through all his published work, and it would not be profitable for our scope.¹ Much of his

¹ The list of Professor Tillich's publications would be too much to publish here. A catalogue, complete for the works up to 1952, can be found in C. W. KEGLEY & R. W. BRETALL's *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, New York, Macmillan, pp. 353-362. The same volume includes an autobiography of Tillich. The basic works for the understanding of Professor Tillich's theology are as follows: *Systematic Theology*, I, Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1951, London, Nisbet, 1951 (the second volume will appear as Tillich's Gifford Lectures given in 1953 and 1954); *The Protestant Era*, Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1948; *The Courage To Be*, Terry Lectures, New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1952; *The Shaking of the Foundations*, New York, Scribner's, 1953; British edition: London, Nisbet, 1950; *Love, Power and Justice*, Firth and Sprunt Lectures, New York & London, Oxford Press, 1954; *The New Being*, New York, Scribner's, 1955.

American Catholic critiques of Tillich have appeared: G. WEIGEL, S. J., *Contemporaneous Protestantism and Paul Tillich*, Theological Studies, XI (1950) 177-202; Id., *Recent Protestant Theology*, Theological Studies, XIV (1953) 573-585; G. TAVARD, A. A., *The Unconditional Concern*, *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, Thought, XXVIII (1953) 234-246, 246.

earlier work is not too significant for our time, though it is significant enough in the evolution of Tillich's vision. Instead of offering an historical conspectus of the growth of Tillich's theology, it seems more profitable to construct an outline of his thought as it exists at the moment. Given such an outline, any theologian will be able to see at least roughly where Tillich is going and what doctrines are implied in order to put flesh and blood on the skeleton.

AS A LOGICAL beginning we must explain Tillich's conception of theology. In the first volume of his *Systematic Theology* the author thoroughly, clearly and with profundity explains his notion of the divine discipline. The thing which must be stressed is his positive doctrine that theology is the rational effort to unite humanly and organically the data of revelation. Now this seemingly obvious formula is not at all obvious. Revelation for Tillich is God's self-manifestation to man. This manifestation is through existentialist encounter and it is immediate. God is presented to us under two aspects. First of all, God ontologically is the ground of being, the *prius* of all thought and reality, the unconditioned "no-thing" to which all things must be referred. Concerning this God we can think and express ourselves only symbolically, for human conceptions are utterly inept to deal with this primal matrix of reality. Concepts can and must be used by the theologian, but they must be used in a "method of correlation." This method demands that the doctrine cohere with the data of the history of revelation, be consistent logically with all the rest of theology, be relevant definitely to all man's concerns as these derive from his total and actual experience.

Secondly, on the phenomenological side, God is the object of man's ultimate

concern—not really the object but rather the first subject. What concerns man ultimately, that is divine and that is the exclusive phenomenological norm for theology. Where reality is considered in obedience to concerns less than ultimate, we have no theology and whatever is said in terms of ultimate human concern is *eo ipso* theology. (It is not necessarily good theology, but it belongs to the theological plane of human thought.)

There is a negative consequence of this positive ultimate theological principle. In line with Barth's thinking but not identical with it, natural theology for Tillich is an unhappy delusion; for it is a complex of fallacious reasonings. The attempt to prove the "existence" of God or the immortality of the soul involves a logical impossibility. This radical stand of Professor Tillich does not mean that he denies all value to past efforts engaged in the formulation of natural theology. All such formulation is really a vital witness of man to the ultimate which he has discovered existentially, aconceptually, in his encounter with the self-revealing God. The concepts used in the testimony about the revelation are not achievements of the divine but only existentialist pointers to the ground of being which is man's ultimate concern. We have in this doctrine a transformation of the Thomistic *analogia entis*, which was studied carefully and seriously by Professor Tillich.

On last analysis, God is reached existentially, aconceptually and immediately by man. But that is hardly the full statement of the matter. Man is a creature of history and community, so that God's self-revelation is made socially and in history through progressive stages. The fuller revelation of God demands a *kairos*, an apt historical moment, in which the reality of God is experienced in a

peculiar way. Consequently Tillich does not refer immediately to man's personal and individual experience of God for his theological construction. Individual experience is only a sharing in the continuous solidarity of the corporate human achievement of God. Individual experience is a carrier of total human experience and so individual experience is a medium but not the source for theological investigation. The specific content of historically progressive revelation, carried by experiencing persons, is given to us in three ways: first, in the Scriptures; secondly, in the continuous life of the Church; thirdly, in the cultural postulates of communities. These are the three sources from which the theologian derives the data relevant to what concerns man ultimately.

However, these three sources can be further reduced. The Bible in its composition and in its transmission did not and does not exist in a void. It is mediated to men by the living community which accepts the Bible. This is the living Church, which is conditioned by the human culture in which it exists. Hence we can say that the three sources of theology can be described by the simpler formula: the biblical message in its assimilation by the living historical Church.

Briefly then, theology is man's intellectual quest for the real under its formal and specifying dimension of relevancy to the ultimate ground of being, or put phenomenologically, the real in terms of ultimate human concern. This is the criterion, or what Catholic theology calls the formal object. Since the ground of being can only be known in revelation which is a human experience of the ultimate, experience is the carrier or medium of theophany. Here the theologian will find his data. However, it is not human experience in individual isolation which genuinely manifests

the revelation, but rather the collective experience of the human family in its historical continuity. This then indicates the methodological norm of the theologian, the method of correlation. The sources of theology, Scripture and Tradition, guide and limit the theological enterprise.

Tillich makes one important addition. The methodological norm, which is formal, leads the theologian to the climactic biblical message of New Being in Christ. That is the content or matter of the revelatory tidings. Hence the ultimate material norm of theology is the consideration of man as the New Being.

It might be well to point out here what was already stated in the beginning of our study. Tillich organically recapitulates all previous Protestant positions. In his conception of revelation and theology we find the inwardness so stressed by Luther and Calvin, and their biblical preoccupations are preserved. We are also offered the later Protestant corrective, namely the theological relevance of the continuous Church and of history. We are given the anti-rationalism which was the heart of pietism and Schleiermacher's sentimentalism. We have the recognition of the legitimacy of contributions from historical-criticism and even empiricism. Finally we feel the pull of existentialism in drawing all these elements together.

What is perhaps more interesting is the way Tillich fuses mysticism and nominalism. Sheer encounter is after a fashion mystical; for knowledge is attained with no content expressible by concepts. From the point of view of categorization, the knowledge is declared to be without content. Yet the experience is significant. It is a mode of perceiving reality anew; conceptually nothing has been added. Universal concepts, the inevitable elements of judgments, are

constructs which are adequate for the work of rendering our contacts with the world luminous. They do not discover the structure of the real, but instead give reality a structure. They are therefore useless in man's achievement of the transcendental, but still useful for the purposes of communicating to men the stimulus whereby the transcendental can be existentially achieved. This is a brilliant fusion of all recent epistemologies: positivism, phenomenology, ontologism, and existentialism. Nor are Scholastic insights ignored. In Tillich Kant and St. Thomas walk in friendship.

Is God personal in this theology? Tillich considers the question to be a pseudo-question. God is suprapersonal. He cannot be called properly either personal or impersonal. Such categories are finite and natural and therefore useless in a discussion of the reality of God, though symbolically the divinity should be described as personal; for only such description makes God significant for man's ultimate concern. However, such a description is only a pointer to the numinous, not a statement about his inner reality. Is God triune? He is if we mean that the human preoccupations with power, justice and love have their ultimate answer in the one ground of being. However, the Trinity is not a metaphysical statement concerning God but only a phenomenological statement about man in terms of his ultimate concern which drives him to meet his last ground in mortal and sinful anxiety.

This encounter is epistemologically a peculiar thing, though historically quite common. It is not natural in the sense that it conforms to the structure of judgment whereby we luminously synthesize the events which make up the finite order. Nor is it an elevation of man into the order of divine reality. This latter notion, absolutely basic in the Catholic notion of the supernatural, is rejected

by Tillich as blasphemous and absurd unless taken symbolically. Man reaches God because man is hounded by anxiety. This anguish has three drives: death, which must overcome life inevitably; guilt, which witnesses man's estrangement from the being he would be; scepticism, which hopelessly seeks for an ultimate truth whereby his existence can become meaningful. When fear of death, guilt and scepticism attack man in their most formidable and final strength, man sees that it is *he* who fears, so that extreme fear itself affirms existence and therefore meaning and justification. In the ground of being there is power, meaning, justice and love. This is the self-revelation of being-itself, which is another Tillichian word for God. The phenomenal subject who is a finite, guilt-ridden man is thus shown to be rooted in an ontological subject greater than he. Man's being (which really means his existence) is a participation of an existence inconceivably transcending the phenomenal subject. The recognition of this truth is not essential knowledge, i. e., through conceptual categories. It is an existential awareness. It carries with it no essential content. It is the same conceptualized world seen in a new light, with a new dimension. The ultimate subject, the ground of existence, is not contemplated; it is only existentially apperceived as illuminating the being of man. This experience is totally grasping but not a bizarre transport.

Is this the God of theism? No, this is the God above and beyond theism. The God of theism can and should be doubted, and in that doubt through existential reflection, the God beyond theism reveals himself.

Is not this solipsistic subjectivism? No, for the existentialist reflection can only be produced by a *kairos*, an historical moment which by its structure

is social and in history and society spontaneously induces the reflection. True, nature alone can lead man to revelation, but it is a man conditioned by culture. The more usual ways toward revelation involve more than a consideration of nature. Some men come to it by moral endeavor which, because of the human situation, is never truly successful but only ambiguous. Some men meet revelation in social history either by immediate contact with a man who has achieved revelation or by the recorded witness to revelation which is the Bible. The majority find it in the life of the Church which is a concrete community under the impact of the Bible message.

Here we have the newer Protestant conception of the Bible. Its propositions are not the revelation, which is carried only by experience, original or dependent. In the Scriptures witness is given to the original experience, which as a stimulus excites a similar experience in others who thus depend on the revelation of others. Hence the Scriptures are pointers whereby the reader can be led to the encounter with the self-revealing God. The Bible considered as a collection of propositions can be called revelation only in an improper sense; for revelation is always an existential experience.

How can I know that revelation is authentic? By its signs. True revelation is recognized by its miraculous epiphenomenon. Only a miracle is the guarantee that a determined experience is revelatory. This sounds like the doctrine of the Council of the Vatican, but it is quite different really. Tillich does not believe in miracles in the sense that they are physical events outside the natural configurations of process. All things in history conform to the universal structures for events, the "natural law." An acceptable meaning for the word miracle is "sign-event"; for the coming of

revelation is divine and therefore wonderful, i. e., ecstatically impressive. In the revelatory experience three things take place. First, a mystery is unveiled. This means that something ineffable, inconceivable is perceived without conceptual content. Second, the event in which the mystery became unveiled is God-produced and thus wonderful. Third, the wonder produced in man is ecstatic, though not in the sense that it is an abnormal mental state. "... ecstasy is the miracle of the mind and ... miracle is the ecstasy of the reality..." (*Systematic Theology*, I, 117).

All that we have stated so far belongs to the propaedeutic of theology. It does not offer us a doctrine, but only the loci and rules for the formulation of doctrine. The data of doctrine Tillich derives according to the principles already cited. The teaching of the Scripture in so far as it has impact on the continuous life of the Church, made manifest in the perennial vital tradition, is datum. Consequently Tillich sincerely and enthusiastically holds the Apostles' and Nicene creeds. He believes in God the Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth. He believes in Jesus Christ as the only Son of God. He believes in the Holy Ghost as proceeding from the Father and the Son. He believes in the holy Catholic Church. He even has no difficulty in believing in the assumption of the Virgin Mary. However, here is the rub. He believes that these are symbolic statements. Literally understood, they are for Tillich non-sense or blasphemy.

IT IS THIS CAPACITY for affirmation and negation which makes Tillich simultaneously fascinating and frightening. Everything is affirmed and yet everything is denied. This fact does not escape Professor Tillich, and he considers it the proper use of the theory of analogy, which is the only way in which we can

speak of the divine, the exclusive object-subject of theology. Analogy affirms and denies, and only in and through analogy can we speak seriously and significantly of God.

Perhaps it would not be too fantastic to say that for Tillich this affirmation-situation is the Catholic-Protestant structure of Christian thought. Catholicism affirms, and it stays loyal to the revelatory data by its affirmations. Protestantism denies the rationalistic or literal meanings of the Catholic formulae, lest they become idolatrous.

This becomes clearer in Tillich's conception of Protestantism. He does not identify it with the Protestant churches. They live off the essence of the Protestant principle; but that principle does not owe its reality to the Protestant churches which might well disappear without destroying the vitality of the principle. Tillich is inclined to believe that the Protestant Era, the historical age when the Protestant churches were a highly significant factor in the evolution of Christianity, is coming to an end. However, should this be so, it would not mean the end of Protestantism, which is essentially the prophetic principle, which lies at the very heart of the Christian vision. It would only mean that the historical manifestation of the Protestant principle would be different than in our day. The Protestant principle is a protest, a protest in the name of the Lord God against all idolatry. It protests not only against the Roman Catholic Church but against the Protestant churches as well. The protest is loyalty to the revealing God so that the believer will tolerate nothing to take the place of his definitive and unique lordship. Nothing at all; whether it be the society of the Church or the letter of the Bible or the insights of philosophers or the formulae of churchmen and divines.

This loyalty which expresses itself in

protest is the soul of Christianity. It makes man theonomous, which as a Tillichian term means that man follows only God as achieved in the encounter of revelation unveiling the ground of being. This God and he alone, is the first and last definitive norm for the believer. Hence the theonomous man is distinguished from the autonomous man who finds his ultimate norm of life and action in himself as revealed by experience and reason. Such a man is a humanist who subscribes to the old principle that man is the measure of all. The theonomous man is also distinguished from the heteronomous man who puts his norm in something finite outside himself because it claims ultimate authority. For Tillich heteronomy is the danger inherent in Catholicism, though he admits that theonomy is possible within its framework, so that the Protestant protest is not really excluded by Catholicism.

What is the essence of Christianity, which from what has been said must not be identified adequately either with Catholicism or Protestantism? It is New Being. This term is the pure essence of Tillich's theology. For a Catholic reader the term can be puzzling. It inescapably brings up the doctrine of Paul from which the term is borrowed and it also suggests Thomistic ontology. Of course Tillich wishes the term to be both Pauline and ontological, but the ontology is not Thomistic. It is existentialist. There is no pretense of giving us a system of categories, abstract and strictly rational. Existentialist ontology is vibrant, living, and immediately relevant to the anguish of existence. To be means to exist; to exist means to live; to live means to feel the drives, pushes and pulls which define the human situation.

This is why Tillich's ontology sounds so familiar and yet so strange to Catholic

theologians. Their ontology is calmer and less involved with the emotions and feelings of the harassed mortal who thinks. This is why the Tillichian doctrine of analogy is like and unlike that of St. Thomas. Tillich from the existentialist point of view reduces Thomistic analogy to the only value it can have in an existentialist scheme. It is the device of symbolic expression where the proposition has no rational content. It is yet significant; for it acts as a pointer to the ultimate existent which is grasped in existentialist awareness that prescinds from the limitations implied in all category systems. The subject-object achieved can only be affirmed, but the categories unavoidably used in the affirmation are ignored in everything they mean beyond their pointing potentiality. It is not that the categories are not used seriously, so that any or every concept could be used. Concretely certain terms and certain things, given concrete peoples in concrete cultures, not only have rational content but by reason of the union of content with existentialist apprehension go beyond content when they are used. Thus Tillich says the Virgin Mary is an important symbol for Catholics but it has lost all symbolic power for the generality of Protestantism (*Systematic Theology*, I, 128).

What is the New Being? In this term God, Jesus and the Church come together. In this term the Scriptures give the essence of their message. In the explanation of this term Christian theology has its function.

What does the term have to say about God? It does not say but rather supposes that beneath and over the reality of natural phenomenon stands the matrix of reality, unseen but yet revealed, meaningful though no human word can express that meaning, real with the ultimate reality incomprehensible according to the categories men construct for

the ordering of their lives and for the vision of the real which impinges on their awareness through direct impact. This is the living God. He is beyond theism which wishes to reduce God to the categories of ordinary human discourse. Such a reduction perhaps destroys God, though its intention is innocent, since it only tries to render more effective the pointing potential of terms and concepts. Is God personal? Is God infinite? Is God the cause of things? These questions are for Tillich unreal questions because they are the illogical quest for a logical God. God transcends logic, and logic is helpless to achieve Him. All that can be said is that God is the ultimate ground of being and thus man's ultimate concern. Being is reached through concern; and concern, though subjective, reveals being. Being, in consequence, is what is relevant to human existence: not because human existence produces being, but because being is meaningless except in terms of human existence.

Where does Jesus Christ fit into this scheme? He is the definite answer to the divine-human question. This must be understood correctly. The man Jesus of Nazareth is not the answer. He was a man like all others, with their defects, virtues, shortcomings and aspirations. To declare him to be God is blasphemy and idolatry. However, with him and in him came the revelation of God rendered definitely luminous in the minds of Christ's disciples who saw in the man Jesus, Jesus as the Christ. It is Jesus as the Christ who definitely reveals God to the world. It is Jesus as the Christ who saves men by showing them man's true response to God. In Jesus as the Christ man rises to the God-dimension of reality, and is thus a New Being. In the passion and death of Jesus, God's acceptance of Jesus and Jesus' acceptance of God unite. Jesus the Christ was the

Son of God in power, and he was the incarnation of the wisdom of God.

Because Jesus as the Christ accepted life even when it upset all his own desires and schemes, he rose above the threatening anxieties of human existence. He died indeed, but his existence was in God; and in consequence, he rose from the dead; and all who join themselves to him in his faith, who trust in God when trust itself seems meaningless, become one with him in New Being. This being transcends the finitude of the human situation, ever exposed to inevitable death, loveless loneliness and meaningless search. In the abiding God who is power, justice and love, man is transfused with life, community and meaning. This is the resurrected life of Jesus, which is not a physical thing but a new mode of existence. The natural has not been annihilated; it has only become absorbed into its ultimate meaning. The old categories have not been superseded; they have only taken on a new dimension which cannot be imagined or categorically expressed. The new dimension adds no content to the old; it only puts the old in a fuller context.

The recognition of Jesus as the Christ was the experience of the first Christians. They expressed their recognition in the books we call the New Testament. These books had to be set into the background of the Old Testament, which is the history of human encounter with God as it was experienced in one people. The combination of Old and New Testaments revealed God and his Christ to men, and the impact of that book as a witness on men produced the Church. The book is not the revelation. It points to it, and each man and each generation, under the pointing prod of the Bible as delivered by the Church can meet God just as the first Christians did. Revelation is always to the individual,

but it is never individualistic, since it is a function of social stimulus. Christ lives in the Church, and outside of the Church he cannot be found.

Needless to say, in this scheme the Church is not to be identified with any group calling itself the Church. The Church is the social carrier of the Christ revelation; it is the transhistorical fellowship of New Beings. The Church is indifferent and condescending to this or that form of polity or structure. Its dogmas are not expressions of philosophical or historical truth, but only efficient pointers to God, who can only be met in encounter. Liturgy and sacraments are perfectly proper to the Church because by them man is effectively guided to God, although this is not achieved by magical automatism. Liturgy and sacraments open the door to encounter, and in so far as they are conducive to this end, they are valid and legitimate elements of the Church's life. Obviously, they are not to be taken as holy in themselves. Hence Tillich can at once justify and correct the Protestant objection to sacramental liturgy. It is justified because it is a protest against the materialization of the divine; and it is corrected because the use of sacrament as a symbolic stimulus for the God-encounter is declared legitimate. However, sacrament and cult are subject to the law of their purpose. Once the concrete symbols lose their symbolic power, they must be dropped because of themselves they are not holy. They are reductively holy if they lead existential awareness to the holy; otherwise they have no holiness at all. Hence Mariology is valid enough in the Catholic tradition because it still has stimulating power in the Catholic framework. But in the Protestant setting it has little meaning or utility.

What is Christian life? It is New Being. This means that man, hemmed in by the absolute meaninglessness of exist-

ence as seen in its phenomenological dimension, threatened by inevitable non-being because of death, solitary in his estrangement from all things by his individuality, accepts in love and trust the unseen meaning, the abiding existence, and the love, which lie at the heart of existence beyond its phenomenological dimension. This is the eschatological aspect of Christianity. This is salvation, produced by faith (i.e., trust) alone. The Christian dogmas of heaven, hell, final resurrection, are not statements concerning physical situations. They are eschatological pointers to New Being, and eschatology means the overcoming of the limited historical consideration of man. Eschatology is the consideration of man beyond history, not the promise of a new history.

Can a morality be erected on this scheme? It can, but it will have a structure not immediately visible in the usual codes of Christianity. The overriding principle, absolute and universal, will be the law of love. Man in love, *agape*, surrenders himself to God the unseen. He seeks not himself autonomously. This love engenders humility; for it is not the affirmation of the phenomenal subject, the little "I," but the recognition that the little, passing, limited "I" is embedded in the true I Who Am. This same love of God sees all men embedded in God as manifestations of power, justice and love; and consequently there is a respect and felt solidarity for all men.

Beyond these universal, ever valid principles nothing will be absolute. A detailed moral code perennially applicable to all men in all times and in all places will help to produce and criticize the concrete codes framed in concrete communities. On the plane of daily life moral relativism will be inevitable, and the resulting ambiguity will always manifest man's abiding sinfulness, be-

cause of which he can never glory, and because of which he must take refuge from his sinfulness in divine acceptance achieved by faith alone.

THIS SCHEME of Paul Tillich's thought is made from the point of view of a Catholic who by that fact cannot be totally sympathetic with the ideas expressed. This lack of total sympathy means that some distortion of the thought cannot be avoided. However, there has been sympathy enough to make substantial objectivity possible. Another limitation distorts this report. Professor Tillich's thought is vast; his erudition, amazing; his breadth, dazzling. A few pages in a review cannot do anything but injustice to his great vision. He is rigorously systematic in his thinking, and therefore he can be presented schematically; but a scheme is like a skeleton and it includes so little of the living reality.

Recognizing these limitations, candor yet demands that the uneasiness with which his thought was achieved be also explained. The brilliance of the Tillichian synthesis cannot soothe the disturbance caused by his theology. It is a great synthesis of Protestantism, better than anything this reporter knows. Everything in the winding history of Protestantism is included and given a place. Justification through faith alone, primacy of the Scriptures, free interpretation, rational criticism, pietistic arationalism, reconstructionism, existentialism—all are kept and fused together into a coherent whole. Needless to say, few if any Protestants will accept completely the Tillich synthesis, but he has shown what Protestantism through evolution now is. Some Protestants keep some of the elements of Protestant development, rejecting others, but Tillich has the courage and capacity to see and take them all consistently.

The first feeling of uneasiness the Catholic experiences on reading Tillich is that his supernaturalism (a term he does not like) is on ultimate reduction purest naturalism. He rejects natural theology on principle, but his whole theology is not only a natural theology, but more ominously a naturalistic theology. The final chapter of his *The Courage To Be* can have a depressing effect; for it seems to equate God with the basic energy at work in the universe but interpreted in terms of human concern. Of course, the book cited is a phenomenology of the human search for God and not a theology. However, the question a Catholic asks is this: does the theology of Tillich add anything to his phenomenology, or is it only the phenomenology written theologically? One reluctantly feels that the theology does nothing to correct the phenomenology.

It is Tillich's epistemology which proves unsettling. It is a melange of Kant, positivism and existentialism. Meaningful knowledge is reduced to empirically founded statements. All other knowledge is either merely formal or symbolic. Unlike Kant, Tillich believes in ontology, but the ontology in which he believes is existentialist. Being means existence, and since existence is experienced meaningfully only by human beings, being can be understood only in terms of human concern. It is not that human concern drives man to ontology, but rather that ontology is the ultimate expression of that concern. In Tillich we never leave the realm of human concern, in spite of the fact that that concern is a dynamism to lead us beyond itself. If this is the role of ontology, then it follows logically that all ontological statement is symbolic. It cannot say anything except concern, and all of its seemingly transpersonal statements are only and necessarily witnesses to human concern, saying nothing which

adds content to what man experiences objectively. This, I submit, is not ontology, but rather its betrayal.

Tillich lays himself open to the charge that he has called man's imperious compulsion to exist the ultimate justification of a stoic acceptance of death, solitude and meaninglessness. Existence is evidently bigger than any existence, and my existence is only one instance of absolute existence. Transcendental existence, therefore, precedes me, goes vigorously through me, and stretches indefinitely beyond me. This existence is called God, the ultimate objective formulation of my felt compulsion to exist. Of course, it is not logical to call it unjust, meaningless and heartless; for justice, power, meaning and love are themselves intelligible only as reductive to existence. Accept existence, therefore, and make the most of it, or, in religious terms, serve the Lord in gladness. In an enthusiastic surrender to the imperious thrust of existence, the black shadows of death, isolation and meaninglessness lose their terrifying aspects, and we live contentedly and creatively.

I do not believe that this really summarizes the thought of Tillich. I do think that such a construction of his thought has warrant in his expressions. The piety so patent in his work prevents the acceptance of the construction as a valid indication of Professor Tillich's world-view. His works give the unescapable impression that he is teaching something deeper and better than an acosmic pantheism touchingly expressed in terms of misery and hope.

If this impression be valid, then the Catholic theologian is faced with a genuine problem. There will be Catholics who will read the works of Tillich and then promptly dismiss him as a naturalist or even an atheist who speaks in biblical terms linked together by a shallow ontology. There will be others who will

be mystified because of the freshness of the approach and the original twists given to old terms so that their content is not too precisely clear.

To those who see in Tillich nothing but an existentialist naturalist it can only be said that they have missed the fearful drive which lies at the heart of his teaching. To those who are mystified it might be well to point out the cause of the mystification.

Tillich's ultimate guide is not his formal ontology. Rather he leans on an epistemology which he has slowly molded in his own mind over the years. This epistemology, like any epistemology, has implicit metaphysical roots. Tillich has the undoubtedly sincere intention of constructing theologically the Christian kerygma. He believes wholeheartedly in that kerygma. He believes that it is the ultimate answer for the problems of our time if it can be theologically constructed on the principle of correlation. That principle, as he explains it, means adherence to the data, consistency in its reconstruction, and relevance to contemporaneous man. Now this principle also worked in St. Thomas, and no Catholic theologian is totally ignorant of it. A Catholic theologian, perhaps more than any other, is scrupulously preoccupied in being true to the data of revelation. This was so even in Origen, who speculated only where he felt that the data were silent. It was true of the Scholastics who were passionately interested in the logical consistency of their doctrine. It was true of St. Robert Bellarmine who was anxious to offer a theology relevant to the Protestants and Catholics of his time. The Tillichian principle of correlation is not a new discovery but only an urgent exhortation to use efficiently the principle always functioning in the theological enterprise, though it often functions, we must admit, with less than desirable energy.

What needs clarification in Tillich's thought is the role of symbolism. He himself thinks that it explains the problem touched by the Thomistic doctrine of analogy. It seems clear to a Catholic reader that Tillich's conception of analogy is inadequate. Let us see why.

First of all, he has identified being with existence, *sensu negante*. Secondly, he supposes that class-concepts have meaningful content only for extra-personal reality as achieved in ordinary human experience. Beyond such an empirical context class-concepts can only be pointers. Thirdly, he recognizes a form of knowledge which gives dimension but not content. The expression of such knowledge which gives dimension is an awareness achieved in the autoperception of existence at the point of its ultimate ground. In consequence, he sees God in his own existence, not because God is identified with the finite subject, but because the finite subject is rooted in an infinite subject, who can be known only as a subject and never as an object. Fifthly, existential awareness is specifically different from the conceptual achievement of empirical objects. This latter knowledge is "natural," i.e., it achieves "nature." The deepest awareness of existence, since it does not give us "nature," can be called supernatural, at least in the sense that it is not "natural." Lastly, though reason is inevitable in all thinking, yet true reasoning, or what Aristotle would call the syllogism, can only use univocal terms. An analogous term cannot enter into a syllogism; and when it does, we have a fallacy and not a true reasoning.

With such an epistemology Tillich's brilliant scheme becomes inevitable for a man who has the talent, learning and courage of Tillich. However, in the light of Thomistic doctrine of analogy, it is evident that a very different scheme can and should be built. St. Thomas does

not believe that analogical terms need be excluded from the syllogism. They can be admitted; but when they are, they only give analogous conclusions. Secondly, an analogous term, when applied beyond nature, is not empty of content. Its content is only of a different order than the content denoted by the same term when applied to nature. But between nature and what is beyond nature there is an objective proportion, so that an equivalence, though not an equality, exists. Two halves are not four quarters, but they are equivalent for the construction of a whole. They are proportional, which means that they are analogous. We have content, not merely pointings. Mathematics, reasoning in its purity, lovingly deals with proportions, and so it is rather willful to say that reasoning demands univocal terms exclusively. Aristotle's rejection of the analogous term in the syllogism was a needless restriction of the inferential rationale in order to make it simple; and Aquinas rejected the restriction because it was needless—and too simple.

The absolute divorce which the existentialists make between subject and object is also willful. Subject and object are both *things*, existentialist howls to the contrary notwithstanding. A thing does not mean something dead beyond subjectivity. A thing just means a reality, which can be living or non-living, subject or object. It is an analogous term. To call God a "nothing" can have a good sense because it attempts to affirm the transcendence of God; but it would be a blasphemous contradiction to make it mean that God is not a thing. God *is a thing*; he is the first thing and the thing because of which all other things are. Thing does not say finitude or relativity, though it can have these meanings when referred to a finite and relative subject or object. It depends on what thing we are talking about. Any

subject can be considered objectively, and I do no violence to the subject by considering it as an object. Any object in some sense is a subject; for any object has its own dynamism which makes it from the viewpoint of action a subject. *Actiones sunt suppositorum*. To reduce the use of subject to living, free, awareful subjects is again a willful restriction of the meaning of the word. And the existentialists do it all the time. The vulgar truth that the interior view of a reality or thing is different from its exterior view hardly warrants the exaggerations of the typical existentialism of our day. It still remains true that I can consider the same thing from the inside and from the outside. Just because the inside view shows up whole phases of the reality which cannot be perceived nor even communicated adequately on the outside, subject and object are not put in different universes of discourse. Existentialism saw that more could be said for a human subject than objective classification allows. That valid insight does not imply that objective classification is false or bad. It only means that it does not tell the whole story.

Thomistic analogy overcomes all existential aporiae; for it is truly transcendental. It dominates the subject-objective dichotomy and is not dominated by it. I can make statements concerning God which have conceptual content, but the content is proportional, not univocal. These are valid positive statements, even though they contain an element of negation. We deny the negative aspects of the category which, after all, was framed originally to take care of reality limited by negation. When I deny the negation, I have God.

But what have I got when I have denied the negative aspect of a category? Does it not lose all of its definiteness by the very process? By no means. No category is purely negative. Pure nothing

is not, nor can it be conceived. There is in all finite reality the basis of the recognition of reality which of itself does not say finitude. *Omnia cognoscuntia cognoscunt implicite Deum in quolibet cognito* (St. Thomas, *De Veritate*, xxii, 2 ad 1).

Thomas does not need Tillich's kindly justification of Thomistic analogy by reducing it to symbolism. Rather, Thomas finds some justification for Tillich's symbolism because it is a weak pointer to solid, inevitable, ontological analogy. Thomistic analogy does not give us a comprehensive grasp of God, but, given human limitations, it gives us an adequate intellection of God. Analogy does not define God; for as St. Thomas says, he cannot be defined. . . . *patet quod [Deus] non habet genus, neque differentias, neque est definitio ipsius* (*Sum. Theol.* 1, 3, 5, c.). But this lack does not mean that he is not understood at all. The understanding is imperfect and proportional. We know that God exists; we cannot know clearly and precisely what he is.

Tillich's apparent naturalism can be understood in the light of Thomistic analogy, and if it is, then Tillich's work can be extremely useful to Catholic theologians. It can be objected that Tillich explicitly rejects Thomistic analogy. This is true, but it is also true that he can consistently take all of the doctrine of St. Thomas, and he certainly does take much of it. He is anxious to admit Thomistic doctrine on Tillichian terms, and the terms are perhaps more generous in Tillich than in any other contemporaneous Protestant theologian. Our age has conditioned Professor Tillich. Where Thomas clung to the affirmatives in the paradoxical grasp of God, Tillich stresses the negative. The difference is more profound than this superficial generalization seems to indicate, but the generalization has the

pragmatic value of making Tillich genuinely relevant to the Catholic theological enterprise.

NOTE.—To give the readers of this report a guarantee of its substantial fidelity to the thought of Professor Tillich, it was submitted to his criticism. With his wonted kindness he read the study and made the following observations: "Thank you very much for your kindness in sending me the manuscript of your excellent article about my theological system. As you know, I am always pleased to read your interpretation and criticism of my thought. This is also true of the present manuscript. It is a confirmation of my doctrine that interpretation can never be repetition. It must always be something new, created by the encounter of the text with the mind of the interpreter. This is even the case when the author becomes his own interpreter. Out of what he had in mind when he wrote his earlier texts and the categories of understanding which are in his mind at the moment he interprets himself, he creates a new thing. In dealing with my texts you have created something above the text written by a Protestant theologian and above your own Thomistic categories of understanding. This is as it should be, and the result is extremely positive.

"Since, however, you allow me to reply to some of your criticisms, I shall gratefully use the occasion and discuss two points made in your critical section. The first one is the question of ontology. I certainly do not identify (as Heidegger in his earlier period *seemed* to do) being with existence. My whole system is based on the distinction of essential and existential being. My doctrine concerning God in good Scholastic tradition asserts that for God the difference between essence and existence is invalid. He is "being-itself" or, in a metaphori-

cal expression, the "power of being." As such he cannot be called a "thing"—even if the term "thing" covers not only objects but subjects as well. For a thing is always an event *within* the universe of events, but God is the creative ground of all events, of every "thing." A God who is less than this is an idol, even though a theistic idol. The "God above the God of theism," of whom I speak in the last chapter of *The Courage to Be*, is the protest against this most refined form of idolatry. My thinking is not naturalistic. Naturalism and supernaturalism provoke each other and should be removed together. Protestant theologians have criticized me on the grounds that the "God above God" is mystical. This is certainly nearer to the truth, but it is hardly a subject of Catholic criticism. With respect to my ontological thought generally, I want to state that it is much less influenced by existentialism than by Aristotle and Schelling. It is my doctrine concerning man in which the influence of existentialism is important.

"The second point of your criticism to which I wish to reply concerns my doctrine of symbolic knowledge. Unfortunately I have not fully developed this notion in the first volume of my *Systematic Theology*, although I have done something in occasional articles. One of the things I always forbid my students to say, is "only a symbol." This bad phrase is rooted in the confusion of sign and symbol. Signs point to something different in which they do not participate at all. Symbols participate in the power of what they symbolize. This is—if I understand Thomas and your interpretation of his thought rightly—the positive or proportional element in the *analogia entis* on which you insist. Such an insistence lies clearly in the line of my doctrine concerning God and of my use of metaphors like "ground

of being" and "power of being" for God. If God is the creative ground of everything that has being, everything, insofar as it is, must express something knowable about God. In this I fully agree with Aquinas. Every symbol—if it is an adequate and not demonic symbol—says something positively true about God. He is not the "ineffable" simply and unconditionally; but on the basis of his ineffability much can and must be said about him. It is not true that in the finite-infinite proportion there is no difference between the kinds of the finite which enter into this proportion. There is a profound difference between the proportion: stone—the infinite, and the proportion: man—the infinite. This

difference is the basis of the possibility whereby God is manifest according to his innermost nature in man but not in a stone. I am grateful to you because your incisive criticism enables me to clarify my doctrine on the symbolic knowledge of God.

"Nevertheless I believe you are right when you say that my understanding of *analogia* is more negative-protesting than positive-affirming. I am more worried about the idolic character of traditional theology and popular beliefs about God than you are. But I am grateful and glad that this Catholic-Protestant dialogue has been made possible by your kindness."

G. W.

THE NEGRO WRITER AND HIS WORLD

GEORGE LAMMING

A NEGRO WRITER is a writer who, through a process of social and historical accidents, encounters himself, so to speak, in a category of men called Negro. He carries his definition like a limb. It travels with him as a necessary guide for the Other's regard. It has settled upon him with an almost natural finality, until he has become it. He is a reluctant part of the conspiracy which identifies him with that condition which the Other has created for them both. He does not emerge as an existence which must be confronted as an unknown dimension; for he is not simply *there*. He is there in a certain way. The eye which catches and cages him has seen him as a man, but a man in spite of. . . . As a result he encounters himself in a state of surprise and embarrassment. He is a little ashamed, not in the crude sense of not wanting to be this or that but in the more resonant sense of shame, the shame that touches every consciousness which feels that it has been seen.

The Negro is a man whom the Other regards as a negro; and the dichotomy, the split as it were, which may exist at the very centre of this consciousness, shall have been created by that old and, it would seem, eternal conflict between

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the naming of a thing and a knowledge of it. For it is one of the mischievous powers of language, and particularly that aspect of language which relates to names, that it enables us to rob things of their power to embarrass us. Language, in this respect, is intentional; and the intention is clearly part of the human will to power. A name is an infinite source of control.

We attribute to any class of objects (stones, leaves, birds, insects) these names, and we have immediately found a way of avoiding the mystery which clothed these objects in their original state of silence and anonymity.

A good example turns up in *Hard Times*. Dickens calls that chapter, "Murdering The Innocents," and although it is clearly a savage comment on the crudeness of educational method at the time, it suggests much more. Let us, for a brief moment, watch Dickens situate his character, Sissy Jupe.

"Girl number twenty," said Mr. Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger, "I don't know that girl. Who is that girl?"

"Sissy Jupe, sir," explained number twenty, blushing, standing up and curtsying.

"Sissy is not a name," said Mr. Gradgrind. "Don't call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia."

"It's father as calls me Sissy, sir," returned the young girl, in a trembling voice, and with another curtsy.

"Then he has no business to do it," said Mr. Gradgrind. "Tell him he mustn't, Cecilia Jupe. Let me see. What is your father?"

"He belongs to the horse-riding, if you please, sir."

Mr. Gradgrind frowned, and waved off the objectionable calling with his hand.

"We don't want to know anything about that here. You mustn't tell us about that here. Your father breaks horses, don't he?"

"If you please, sir, when they can get any to break, they do break horses in the ring, sir."

"You mustn't tell us about the ring here. Very well, then. Describe your father as a horse-breaker. He doctors sick horses, I dare say?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Very well, then. He is a veterinary surgeon, a farrier and horse-breaker. Give me your definition of a horse."

(Sissy Jupe is thrown into the greatest alarm by this demand.)

"Girl number twenty unable to define a horse!" said Mr. Gradgrind, for the general behalf of all the little pitchers. "Girl number twenty possessed of no facts, in reference to one of the commonest of animals! Some boy's definition of a horse. Bitzer, yours."

Of course Sissy knows horses, but it is, in the particular context, an irrelevant knowledge. It is a knowledge which suggests participation, and where there is real participation, there tends to be an absence of determinants, definitions, directions. But let us hear from Bitzer who is alternative to Sissy.

"Bitzer," said Thomas Gradgrind. "Your definition of a horse."

"Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth." Thus (and much more) Bitzer.

"Now girl number twenty," said Mr. Gradgrind, "You know what a horse is."

This is a sad knowledge, but it is appropriate; for having found our references we can all, with the exception of Sissy Jupe, move forward.

Following such an example, we can see a kind of contradictory intention at the very heart of words. They may

equip us through their power of symbolisation for an investigation into what is not known to us and they may also be an unconscious mechanism for our fear of the unknown.

This situation confronts us today with larger and much more frightening manifestations. The word "bourgeois" can call forth in the mind of the communist such an obscene parade of deceptions, disloyalties, cowardice and oppression, that the latter is convinced that what stands before him is a monstrous enemy whose immediate future must be liquidation; and similarly the word "communist" is charged with such an enormous power of explosiveness, that the other feels an immediate and almost unbearably direct experience of evil itself. It is the end of the world for all God's children.

To speak of the situation of the Negro writer is therefore to speak of a problem of Man, and more precisely, of a contemporary situation which surrounds men with an urgency that is probably unprecedented. It is to speak of the universal sense of separation and abandonment, frustration and loss, and above all, of man's direct inner experience of something missing. "Man," says the French writer, André Malraux, "is an animal which refuses to be what he is." He is also, one may add, an animal condemned to a permanent awareness of absence. The case of the Negro writer in the contemporary world of letters provides us therefore with an isolated but very concrete example of what we have come to call the human condition. It is a condition which is essentially and, I believe, originally, tragic. The factors which constitute the tragedy are the peculiar nature of the animal which refuses to be what he is; the sense of a distance between the individual consciousness and a total reality as it impinges upon that consciousness: the

conviction, as a fact of experience, of absence.

In my book, *The Emigrants*, the African Azi (who is, I suppose, in Bitzer's terms of knowledge, a real Negro) has had a brilliant career as a mathematician at Cambridge. He experiences a certain dislocation of facts, in the historical sense, and meanings. He is stricken by a lack of references, and as a result he is forced to consider the whole problem of significance. Here is an extract from a letter to his tutor:

"I think I begin to understand two things. One is the accidental nature of social relations. This is what I think they call History. All the roles which different classes play in any collectivity might just have been reversed. Privilege is simply a relation which defines one group in terms of another, and if you examine the matter, you'll see, Andrews, that the dominated might very well have been the dominant. If you like you can explain the relations in terms of their historical development, but beneath the history, there's no reason we can detect for these things being what they are.

"The other is the insignificance of events. The same errors are committed, the same consequences crush us. But nothing really happens. We adjust to some abstraction as easily as we adjust to some concrete occurrence. It does not matter what is involved, massacre or mystery. If we need things to occur before we can change, it seems that what happens is wasted on us, or nothing ever really happens.

"So I arrived at a point, a standstill. First of all I must leave Cambridge for a while. And I realised that I was just drifting, a bit of flotsam, if you like, but conscious of itself in that drift. I wanted to choose something, but when I tried I realised that I didn't know what to choose. If I acted on instinct, I couldn't call that choice because choice ultimately implies a relation of transcendence. An ultimate value by

which I choose, and I had no experience of such a value. There was only habit. Honesty, telling the truth rather than a lie, the instinct to survive, this opposition to death—all these constituted habit, or rather habit dictated these, and I couldn't admit that such was the true foundation of my action, my choice. For a man there is something profoundly humiliating about such an admission. But I felt there was freedom, that I was even free to do away with this humiliation. Freedom! I don't mean, Andrews, some exemption from a social force—nothing that shows my relation to another in a group—I mean something a-logical, something that seems always outside the reach of any demands a particular situation might make of you, freedom as an experience of the self in a state of unconditional awareness. I do not attain to this freedom. It is an attribute of me..."

And there is always contained in such a statement of feeling a confession of one clear desire. It is the desire for totality, a desire to deal effectively with that gap, that distance which separates one man from another, and also in the case of an acute reflective self-consciousness, separates a man from himself. In the isolated case of the Negro it is the desire, not merely to rebel against the consequences of a certain social classification, but also the desire to redefine himself for the comprehension of the Other, and in the hope that the stage shall have been set for some kind of meaningful communication.

THE NEGRO WRITER joins hands therefore not so much with a Negro audience as with every writer whose work is a form of self enquiry, a clarification of his relations with other men, and a report on his own very highly subjective conception of the possible meaning of man's life.

To speak of his situation is to speak

of man's moral need to find a centre as well as a circumference which embraces some reality whose meaning satisfies his intellect and may prove pleasing to his senses. But a man's life assumes meaning first in his relation with other men, and his experience, which is what the writer is trying always to share with the reader, is made up not only of the things which happen to him, in his encounter with others, but also of the different meanings and values which he chooses to place on what has happened. What happens to him depends to a great extent on the particular world he happens to be living in, and the way he chooses to deal with his own experience is determined by the kind of person he considers himself to be. In other words, he is continually being shaped by the particular world which accommodates him, or if you like, refuses to do so; and at the same time he is shaping, through his own desires, needs and idiosyncracies, a world of his own. And since a writer's work is meant for public consideration and, through the wonderful devices of printing, translation and distribution, is continually extending to places and people with whom he may have no direct experience, another world is being created about him.

What then, we may ask, is really meant by the term "world," in the particular context of these remarks. There are, I would suggest, three worlds to which the writer bears in some way a responsibility, worlds which are distinct, and yet very deeply related. There is first of all the world of the private and hidden self, a world which turns quietly, sometimes turbulently, within one man, and which might be only known by others after that man has spoken. Each man who becomes aware of himself as separate existence shares this solitude, each man has had an experience, momentary or prolonged, of the mean-

ing of being alone. I do not mean loneliness or any similar illness of certain self-important natures. I am speaking of the experience proceeding from the depths of one's being, of *existing*.

It is a moment marked by silence. It is the moment when a man's utterance cannot catch and convey the shape and shade of his feeling and his thought.

Language, it would seem, has actually surrendered just when his need is greatest. It is then he requires this weapon of words to enter that hidden area of his consciousness, and bring back with it, so to speak, the kind of picture which the Other's eye cannot conceive. In ordinary circumstances this effort is never carried through. A verdict of guilty may be directed against people who have been betrayed not by their guilt, but by that appalling and impotent failure to communicate their innocence. And when there is no condemnation, the matter is easily forgotten. The ordinary person is, time and again, seized by an experience, a meaning perhaps, and quickly abandons the attempt to grasp it completely because the exercise, from the start, seems too much of a burden; and after all, he will say it doesn't really matter. Or even if the desire to struggle is real, the urgencies of living make it difficult to sustain his interest; because there is something to be done, something which requires his immediate attention if life is to be livable. Day-to-day living keeps intruding on that private and solitary world of concerns. It may take the form of the bad-tempered husband who makes trouble when he can't find something more dramatic to occupy his energy. Or the rent is overdue. All these things make for a great nuisance. They are what the Danish philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard, calls "the immediate neighbourhood," one's family, sometimes one's enemies, and one's friends always.

But for the writer this private world is his one priceless possession. It is precisely from this point that everything else will proceed, and in these circumstances it cannot be sacrificed to the immediate neighbourhood; because nothing can take its place. It is his capital. He may gain by it or lose by it, but without it he cannot function. Why he should be possessed in this way is a matter we do not understand, and which the psychologists will, for a long time, try to disentangle. We must accept it as a fact of his experience. But it is this possession which is responsible for his relation to words. He has failed until he has caught some part of that world and given it form in language. Words are his anchor and his spear; he has got to keep them in preparation and in order, and when they begin to wear under their work, he must find new ones, for the work must go on. A writer does not only use language, he helps to make language. To any decent man who is anxious to feed his children and comfort his wife and be amiable to his neighbours, this perpetual rage with words must seem a kind of lunacy, and that judgment will not be far wrong; for the writer is, in fact, a kind of lunatic whose insanity is only kept in control by his occasional triumph of expression:

"Rain, rain, rain . . . my mother put her head through the window to let the neighbours know that I was nine, and they flattered me with the consolation that my birthday had brought showers of blessing. The morning laden with cloud soon passed into noon, and the noon neutral and silent into the sodden grimness of an evening that waded through water. That evening I kept an eye on the crevices of our wasted roof where the colour of the shingles had turned to mourning black, and waited for the weather to rehearse my wishes.

But the evening settled on the slush of the roads that dissolved in parts into pools of clay, and I wept for the watery waste of my ninth important day. Yet I was wrong, my mother protested; it was irreverent to disapprove the will of the Lord or reject the consolation that my birthday had brought showers of blessing.

"It was my ninth celebration of the gift of life, my ninth celebration of the consistent lack of an occasion for celebration. From a window where the spray had given the sill a little wet life I watched the water ride through the lanes and alleys that multiplied behind the barracks that neighboured our house. The white stalks of the lily lay flat under the hammering rain, then coaxed their roots from the earth and drifted across the upturned clay, into the canals and on to the deep black river where by agreement the folds converged. The water rose higher and higher until the fern and flowers on our verandah were flooded. It came through the creases of the door, and expanded across the uncarpeted borders of the floor. My mother brought sacks that absorbed it quickly, but overhead the crevices of the roof were weeping rain, and surfacing the carpet, and the epergne of flowers and fern were liquid, glittering curves which the mourning black of the shingles had bequeathed. No one seemed to notice how the noon had passed to evening, the evening to night; nor to worry that the weather had played me false. Nothing mattered but the showers of blessing and the eternal will of the water's source. And I might have accepted the consolation if it weren't that the floods had chosen to follow me in the celebration of all my years, evoking the image of those legendary waters which had once arisen to set a curse on the course of man.

"As if in serious imitation of the

waters that raced outside, our lives—meaning our fears and their corresponding ideals—seemed to escape down an imaginary drain that was our future. Our capacity for feeling had grown as large as the flood, but the prayers of a simple village seemed as precariously adequate as the houses hoisted on water. Of course, it was difficult to see what was happening outside, but these were paddling splashes of boys' feet and the choke of an engine stuck in mud." (*In the Castle of my Skin*).

THIS WORLD, as I say, is private. It contains the range of his ambitions, his deceptions, his perplexity, his pride, his shame, his guilt, his honour and his needs. All these qualities are there, hidden in the castle of his skin. And it would do some students very much good, if it were beaten into their heads from the start that the book which they are seriously reading is not some specimen which was specially made to test their brains. No creative writer has ever really known that he was going to become a source of such torment for young people who have innocently chosen English as their discipline, and many a writer would have hated the idea of ever becoming a text. To confront a book, as a serious student of literature, is to confront a man in his nakedness; and the measure of our understanding is determined by the delicacy of feeling and appreciation with which we have submitted to that private world which he has tried to transform with language and meaning. But that private world of the writer is modified, even made possible, by the world in which he moves among other men. Much as he may wish that there were fewer of them around, he cannot do without them; for it is through the presence of the others that one's own presence is given meaning.

What then is the relation of a writer to a society in which, for reasons which have nothing to do with his work, he is regarded as different? When the difference carries consequences of injustice, his relation is not different from that of any other who shares a similar misfortune. An identical suffering holds them together in defense or attack with those who are a part of his misfortune, and since this misfortune of difference enters his private world, one expects his work as a writer to be, in part, a witness to that misfortune. Not because there is a moral law which demands that he address himself to his social world, but rather because there is a fundamental need to present his private world in all its facets, and one of its vivid experiences will of necessity be the impact which that social world, with all its reservations and distinctions, has made on his consciousness. This is the sense in which it is true to say that a writer has a real and primary responsibility to himself.

From the point of view of imaginative literature, this social classification which manifests itself most violently through race, is a peculiar torment and a peculiar challenge for the writer who suffers its disadvantage. About the situation in America, I would say briefly, that the torment has been real, and so overwhelmingly challenging that the meaning of the challenge has not always been clearly seen, in all its largeness, by all Negro writers of distinction. And the reason is simple. If you are continually and ruthlessly bombarded by floods, you can easily forget how precious a gentle shower of rain can be. And the floods, which may spring from rain, soon lose that identification with rain in their common source of water. It seems after a while that there is no real connection between water and water, the gentle shower and the op-

posing flood; for the abundance of the one has severed it from its real link with the other.

Similarly, if through the character and the fate of his country, a writer's senses have been consistently assaulted by the vast pressure of a single issue, it is not difficult for him to lose sight, for a time, of the connection between the disaster which threatens to reduce him and the wider context and condition of which his disaster is but the clearest example. The Negro in the United States symbolises an essential condition of Man, not merely in his urgent need to correct a social injustice through powers of law, but also in his need to embark upon a definition of himself as man in the world of man.

For the third of his worlds, the world to which he is condemned by the fact of his spirit, is the world of men. He shares in their community. What he cannot escape is the essential need to find meaning for his destiny, and every utterance he makes in this direction is an utterance made on behalf of all men. And his responsibility to that other world, his third world, will be judged on tonly by the authenticity and power with which his own private world is presented, but also by the honesty with which he interprets the world of his social relations, his country, that is, for those who have no direct experience of it, but are moved by the power of his speech, his judgement and his good faith.

BEING AND SUBJECTIVITY

JOSEPH DE FINANCE

THOMISM IS GENERALLY regarded by our contemporaries as a philosophy of the *object*. This judgment is not without foundation. For St. Thomas as for Aristotle, scientific knowledge deals only with the universal; truth is found only in what is true for all. Being, the real, is that which does not depend on my subjective dispositions, on my good pleasure, but that which holds true for others as well as for myself. Being is "out there," confronting my thought, opposing itself to it. Even if Thomists concede that thought does not exist outside of being—for thought, as a concrete activity of the mind, is being—still they maintain a subtle difference, it seems, between thought, considered as pure interiority, and the being which confronts it and which it is its function to reproduce within itself. In a word, *the order of being is the order of objects*, and the subject enters into the domain of being only insofar as it is capable of being transformed into an object. In its intimate depths, in the abyss of its incommunicable and ineffable subjectivity, the subject constitutes a domain into which the metaphysician—specialist of being that he is—cannot enter.

One of the characteristics of contemporary thought, on the contrary, is the ever-increasing importance accorded to the *subject* as such. By subject we do not mean merely (as in the systems deriving from the *Cogito*)¹ a *thinking sub-*

ject, always in peril either of being dissolved into its own representations or of being volatilized into an abstract function of synthesis. We mean the *human existent*, which is not content with thinking but which wills and acts and seeks and doubts and suffers, gnawed by cares and anxieties—the existent which is *itself* and not this or that other, which is irreplaceable in the solitude of its liberty and in the uniqueness of its vocation and of its destiny. It is the subject thus understood which now emerges as the center of philosophical preoccupation in so many modern thinkers.

This brings along with it a whole new classification of values. Truth, formerly identified with the universal and the objective, now tends to become the privilege of subjectivity. What is true is above all what is true *for me*. "There is only one truth," Bergson used to say. "Each man has his own truth," replies Karl Jaspers. For truth is authentically truth only if it is incorporated into our own being. But our truest being is not that part of us which can be exposed to everyone, which belongs to the public domain and which others can know as well or better than ourselves. Authentic existence belongs to what is strictly *my own*, to what is accessible to no other consciousness save my own. "Subjectivity is the truth."² From this derives the importance accorded to *authenticity*. The important thing is no longer how to conform oneself by thought to an impersonal and objective being. What counts is how to be myself, how to express fully my subjectivity in my own life, instead of losing myself in the amorphous and anonymous mass of the "they," that is, of the existent reduced to its objective surface.

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It would be futile to deny or minimize the deepening that these new currents have brought to philosophical thought, to the advantage even of those who oppose them. It is no longer possible today to deny their rightful place to the values of interiority and of subjectivity, to all that makes the individual properly unique. True, the problem of individuality does not date from yesterday. A Scholastic should be less tempted to forget this than any one else. But, when traditional philosophy did treat of the individual, it speculated about it as an object and expressed itself in terms proper to an object. The subjectivity hidden within remained outside of its horizon. Furthermore, in a metaphysics haunted by the memory of Platonism, where the individual appeared as nothing but a limitation of an Idea, how could subjectivity ever have succeeded in winning full recognition for its positive and original value? In any event, no one can deny that the mystery of the "I" in its uniqueness and mysterious depths has never been appreciated so keenly as in our own day, or, if it has, this appreciation has had scarcely any repercussions in philosophy. (Exception must be made here for St. Augustine and Pascal.) It was undeniably beneficial that a reaction should set in to force us to recognize the importance of this dimension of the real.

The consequence, however, is inescapable. If being includes not only the object as such but also and even more so the subject in its very subjectivity, and if, on the other hand, traditional philosophy—to be more specific, Thomistic philosophy—considers being only in the manner of an object, then we must conclude that this philosophy is incapable of molding itself to all the contours of the real and capturing all the richness of being. What is richest in being eludes it. If this be the case,

of what value are its constructions? Do theses such as the doctrine of act and potency, the principle of causality, etc., which are no doubt valid for the world of objects, still preserve their truth value when applied to the domain of subjects as such? In other words, if this charge be true, does not Scholastic ontology turn out to be merely a "regional" ontology, and would not the attempt to apply it universally involve a certain "flattening out" of reality?

THE CHALLENGE is a serious one. It must be faced squarely and calmly. The first step is to make clear its exact import. The term "objective" carries with it a pejorative connotation today. This is due in good part, we feel, to the accepted meaning this word has taken on in ordinary language. It calls up at once the notion of *thing*, in the most opaque sense of the term, as a reality which I can get hold of and handle because it is entirely in front of me and outside of me. Since I am not involved in it, its intelligibility is independent of me, and anyone else in my place would see it just as I do. But this very universality, which seems to guarantee the truth of our knowledge, is, on the contrary, just what constitutes its limitation and its incurable superficiality; for it proves that all I penetrate to in the being in question is what it yields up to all comers and not the precious core of its intimate singularity. No doubt, when it is a question of things, in the strict sense of material things, this is of no great moment. A mere thing as such has no depth, no interiority. To know it according to the mode of an object is to know it truly, or, at least, to know it insofar as the knowledge of it interests us. But it is quite otherwise when we are dealing with *persons*, with *subjects*. To understand them in the manner of an object is in reality to misunderstand them.

If Thomism, therefore, when it affirms that being is the *object* of the intellect, were to interpret the word *object* in this narrow sense, it could not escape the reproach of depriving being of its existential dimension, of turning it purely and simply into an essence. For the object or thing, as deprived of its interiority and capable of being taken possession of by anyone at all, is properly the essence as such. (The word thing, *res*, remarks St. Thomas, designates a being considered according to its essence—*De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 1.)

At this point it should be noted that the Thomistic terminology, despite its precision, remains very flexible. The word *object*, among others, takes on a less rigid meaning for it than for our contemporaries. The object of knowledge means whatever knowledge attains, in any way whatsoever. But this reply is not yet adequate. Metaphysics is not just any kind of knowledge. It is rational knowledge, proceeding by way of concepts. Now the concept is *objective*, in the proper sense of the term. To speak of a conceptual knowledge of being seems to imply that subjectivity must be excluded definitely from its grasp.

Let us admit it: the objection would be very telling if being had to be situated, without further qualifications, among the "separated forms" (*χωριστά*) in the highest heaven of abstraction. But against authentic Thomism we believe this difficulty is inoperative. Being, for a Thomist, is not the last degree of the ascending series of universals. It is not an abstraction, at least not in the same sense as other universals. Instead of excluding all differentiating notes from its comprehension, it absorbs them within it. They are all contained therein, not only in a virtual manner and insofar as their opposition allows some basic similarity to subsist between them, but actually, according to their reality

as differences, although vaguely and confusedly. In other words, the idea of being expresses in beings not only that which they all have in common but also that by which each one is incommunicably itself.

This thesis of Cajetan seems at first approach disconcerting. But it demands acceptance, it seems, once we admit that these differences, considered as "formally" as one wishes, are not *nothing* and that there is no middle ground between *nothing* and *something*. Since they are something, since they are real, these differentiating notes, down to their ultimate irreducible singularity, are all expressed in the idea of being. The latter presents itself to us, accordingly, as signifying the *communion of singulars in their very singularity*.

Now there is no reason which obliges us to consider these differences only under their objective aspect. Everything invites us rather to include all the depth of their subjectivity, all that is unique, irreplaceable, and incommunicable in the consciousness of our *ego* and in the exercise of our liberty. It is impossible to refuse the value of being to the subjective distinctiveness of each one of us. My consciousness of myself—not as the knowledge of a particular object which happens to be me, but as the absolutely incommunicable presence of the "I"—is not nothing. In a sense even, it is everything, since the universe of objects exists for me only through it. Thus the idea of being must envelop within itself the value even of the most intimate subjectivity. The "I" which thinks being, the act by which *I* think it, the liberty which takes sides with respect to it, all that is most interior and most singular in my personal attitude—all this is being.

It follows evidently that the idea of being cannot be totally *objectified*. Not only can I not isolate it completely

from the particular determinations of the beings which confront me, but I cannot even disengage it fully from the atmosphere, as it were, in which it is enveloped by the very act in which I think it. Neither can I exclude my own self from the domain of being to consider it as something alien. In other words, according to the remark and the terminology of M. Gabriel Marcel, being is a mystery, that is to say, "a question which encroaches on its own data." It is in those doctrines, on the contrary, where the idea of being is presented as capable of being isolated from its differences that being appears far more as a mere *object*. There I can stand back at a distance from it. It turns into a *problem*, the same author would say. Reason is more at ease here, for being thus conceived is so much clearer and easier to handle. But we know well enough what difficulties arise when we try to apply this strictly objectified and univocal notion to reality itself.

IF THE IDEA of being is for us a "mystery," there can be no question of making it perfectly clear. At the same time we should go as far as we can in laying bare its structure. But to say, as we have so far, that it includes its own differentiating notes, that it envelops the very act which thinks it, is to surround it with a question mark rather than to shed light on it. We must take up at a deeper level the problem of the relations between the subject and being.

Being, says St. Thomas, is the first object which falls under the apprehension of the intellect.³ But being is not an essence abstracted from existence. Genuine being, *ens*, is the *existent*, and only in function of it can the possible be conceived; for the possible is *that which can exist*. The idea of being implies, therefore, the apprehension of existence, and by this I mean existence as *actually*

exercised, since, without reference to the latter, existence as *signified* (i.e., as merely thought about without being affirmed) would be nothing but an empty form. But the apprehension of existence in the concrete cannot be separated from its affirmation. If we are using terms in their full rigor, existence cannot be the object of a concept. The mind does not possess it by a form impressed upon it, but by means of an act in which it relives according to its own mode of being the very act itself of the other.⁴ The idea of being implies, therefore, its own affirmation, and, up to this point, the ontological argument is valid (that is to say, in this one case, at least, the idea necessarily implies the existence of its object).

But just what is this "being" whose affirmation conditions all our intellectual activity? It can be neither subject nor object, for both subject and object are grasped within being. They share *in* being, hence their affirmation logically presupposes the affirmation of being itself. The primary affirmation—primary not in this sense that it precedes all others chronologically, but in the sense that it expresses the fundamental reaction of the mind towards the empirical variety of whatever it affirms—the primary affirmation is the following: "There is an existent," or, if you wish, "The existent exists" (but not in the same sense in which one would say, "The square is square;" there is no question here of the logical inclusion of the predicate within the subject; we are at the roots of the logical order itself). Being at this stage is posited neither as exterior nor as interior to the intelligence. *It is, purely and simply.*

This primary evidence, constitutive of the very structure of the mind, alone permits the surmounting of rationalistic idealism, while making use of it up to a certain point in order to transcend

the empiricism of the immediately given. But, in addition to the fact that this evidence is never present in a pure state (I affirm being only in affirming some being, this particular being), the mind, at the very moment when it brings it into focus by reflection, cannot go on to clarify it without seeing it open out into multiple affirmations. I cannot affirm being without affirming myself within being. The affirmer, submerged at first in his own affirmation, emerges under the light of reflection. I am in being and being is in me. Or, if one prefers, being presents itself to me at once as the object of my thought and as constitutive of my subjectivity itself. If the idea of being came to me from consciousness and the *Cogito* alone, I would be in danger of remaining locked up within my ego. Descartes escapes subjectivism only by discerning, in the most intimate depths of his consciousness, the liberating presence of the Idea of God. But in reality there is no innate idea of God other than the movement of the mind itself towards the Absolute, which gives our affirmations their firmness and our idea of being its transcendence.

By this presence of the Absolute within me, my consciousness acquires a firm foundation and a universal validity: a validity and a truth for all. My toothache cannot be communicated, but the knowledge that I have of it, objectively considered, can be. At the same time the "I" inserts itself in an order wider than itself: I *am not* being; I *am within* being, I *share in* being. Solipsism is radically excluded. The *objective* presence of being, the sign of the presence of the Absolute within us, is indispensable in order to save our thought from the asphyxiation of subjectivism.

Logically even, this objective presence is prior. But must it be dissociated from the other mode of presence, the subjec-

tive? Must it be taken as sufficient by itself to open up all the depths of being? We do not think so. It is only through the medium of subjective reflection that being reveals its dimension of interiority. In this light, and in this light only, does it appear as *existent* in the full sense of the word. Without the immediate grasp of the ego the idea of being would remain as empty as the Kantian categories deprived of intuition. The ego in its relation to the Absolute and the universal thus manifests itself as the datum which underlies the entire activity of the mind. We must not, however, distinguish the ego and its relation to the Absolute as two elements which can be isolated. The ego is nothing without this relation, which enters into its intimate constitution precisely as ego (a more detailed analysis would bring this out without difficulty),⁵ and this relation, on its part, is immediately given to me only in the ego, in the experience of my own spiritual activity.

But, it may be said, does not the objective presence of being imply of itself the existence of being in general? Undoubtedly it does, since, as we have shown, it is impossible to think being without referring to some existent in act. But the point is that it is also impossible for me to think an existent otherwise than in its relation to the ego.

Objectively, being presents itself to me as that which imposes itself on my affirmation, that which I cannot avoid, that which is not relative to my caprice or to my contingent peculiarities, in a word, that which exists for every mind, for Thought in its absoluteness. It should be noted that these latter characteristics, which seem to eliminate the point of view of the ego, actually include it by that very fact. To say that being, objectively considered, is that which does not depend on my ego is to

introduce the ego itself into the notion of the objective. Besides, what experience can I have of Thought outside of the experience of *my* thought? But it remains that being, apprehended solely as object, as correlative to the ego, is lacking in depth. I cannot endow it with a "third dimension," so to speak, except by affirming an act which corresponds to my own act of affirmation and which the latter takes up and makes interior to itself. It is in the act of the mind that I truly grasp the act of being.

Now the affirmation can be envisaged from two points of view: in its subjective reality, as determination of the ego and, in the last analysis, as a modality of existence; or in its intentional content, its "objective being." Under the latter aspect the act of existing is present in the affirmation in somewhat the same way as the term of motion is present in the motion itself. The analysis of judgment and of its objective implications could, indeed, lead us to posit an Absolute in the order of existence, which grounds the validity of our partial affirmations. But this Absolute and the existences which depend upon it would remain deprived of true interiority for us, if the ego did not make manifest a new order of value that objective thought, as such, is unable to perceive. In other words, not only is being, properly speaking, incapable of being represented, of becoming an *object*, but our reflection of the affirmation, if it stopped short at the intentional content of the latter, that is, if it attained to thought *exclusively as thought*, would deliver to us only an existence without depth and, in the last analysis, a non-existing existence.

The latter hypothesis, of course, is unthinkable and, ultimately, self-contradictory. First of all, the ego (despite what some may hold) is not absent from any of its acts, and especially not from

the judgment, which of its very essence involves a reflection on the subject. Secondly, since the relation to the absolute is, as we have said, constitutive of the ego, it is impossible to grasp it in all its truth and depth independently of the latter. It is only by losing myself in the Absolute and the Universal that I find myself and discover my true self in its most intimate privacy. But, conversely, it is only by descending to the deepest level of myself, to what constitutes me as *I*, to this irreducible core of my personality, the shrine of what is most serious and authentic in me, and the theater of my eternal commitments, that I meet the Universal and the Absolute.

It is, therefore, precisely insofar as it is a modality of my own existence that the act of affirmation enriches my notion of being with the dimension of interiority. In other words, if the affirmation is in fact capable of seizing within its grasp the existence of the object, it is only because, as activity, it is rooted in the existence of the subject. I know being only because I am myself a sharer in being. Identity in the intentional order presupposes connaturality in the real order. I know the being that I am thinking about, not merely as there before me, as one with me in the act of thought, but, more profoundly, as communing with me in existence, as participating in its own way in this same standing-out-from-nothing which makes me here and now present. Subjective thought and objective thought, consciousness and knowledge mutually include each other and can be isolated only by attraction. The idea of being includes at once being as present to the mind in its role as object and being grasped immediately as constituting the very reality of the ego. It involves a relation and a tension, as it were, between my *consciousness of self*

and my *tendency towards the absolute*.

But that is not all. If I do not affirm being without affirming myself, neither do I affirm myself without affirming opposite me an object, in the narrowest sense of the term. The shock of some sense object, whatever it may be, is, for the human mind, the necessary condition for every affirmation of existence. Thus the affirmation of being in us involves essentially (and not merely in virtue of contingent circumstances) the affirmation both of subject and of object, both of the ego and of the thing. A further analysis would be required to ascertain that, if the ego cannot affirm being without affirming itself and the object, this necessity is due to the fact that it is I, a human subject, who am making the affirmation. It is not due to being as such.

Furthermore, it would perhaps be more exact to say, in company with a good number of our contemporaries, that the first distinct datum, known either after or together with the ego itself, is another ego, a *thou*. Experience seems to confirm this view of things, for the child does indeed seem to be interested in and to recognize persons before recognizing things. But, in any event, this communication with persons, this affirmation of a *thou* confronting an *I*, is made possible only through the mediation of a thing, an object. At the very least, the ego must objectify itself in a sign.

Thus the affirmation of being opens out into the affirmation of myself-within-being, then into the affirmation of myself - and - others - and - objects - within-being. It is in this way that the notion of plurality enters in. By this we do not mean a plurality that is merely superficial, a plurality of mere aspects or modalities which would remain on the surface of the compact mass of otherwise undifferentiated being. That this

multiplicity affects being radically and in depth is assured me by the presence within being of the personal value of my own ego, which, by its very act of affirmation, takes its stand in the presence of being, commits itself, and so manifests its irreducible singularity. Monism is thus ruled out at once. It is essential to being that it be open to participation by different subjects. To ask the why of this, to seek the means of passing from the idea of pure Being, subsisting in itself, to that of participation, would imply that the idea of being could be given to us outside of participation. This would come back to admitting the totally objectified notion of being, scraped clean of all its differentiating notes, which we have already rejected. Creation, certainly, remains a mystery, a profound mystery. But it is none other than the mystery of being itself.

The totality of other egos and things makes up the *world*. Thus we end up with the formula: myself-in-the-world-within-being. The relationship between these expressions, myself-within-being and myself-in-the-world, is exactly the same as that acknowledged by Thomists between the *formal* object of the human intellect, being, and its *proper* object, being with its intelligibility immersed in the sensible (*quidditas seu natura in materia corporali existens*—*Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 84, a. 7). Nothing obliges us to restrict the meaning of the latter expression to that of inert things. Let us not forget that man, for the Scholastics as well as for Aristotle, is a *res sensibilis* (a thing belonging to the sensible order), although *sui generis*, and that the treatise *On the Soul* remains a branch of Physics. The traditional formula excludes by right only the disincarnated spiritual from the proper object of human knowledge. If we were to set off, therefore, within the scope of this *prop-*

er object, human reality as the *most proper object* of our knowledge, we would no doubt be giving an unforeseen extension to the classic thesis, but would by no means be distorting it. One could even hold that such a position is more in harmony with the principle invoked by St. Thomas himself: "The potency of a cognitive agent is proportioned to the object of its knowledge"—on condition, of course, that it be expanded a little.⁶

Subject and object, ego and thing, evidently constitute two very different types of being. I exist *for myself*; the object, as such, exists *in itself*. But not only is it a phenomenon relative to my knowledge of it; it does not truly exist *for itself*. I appear to myself, precisely insofar as I am an *I*, as possessing a value incommensurable with that of mere things; by my thought I introduce a kind of new dimension into the world; by my liberty I am in some manner cause of myself. It is quite evident that this is a way of existing quite different from that of a mere thing. (It would not be to the point to object here that liberty and thought are on the level of accidental operation, not of substantial being. For operation, too, is in the order of being. And if the ego were not radically different from a mere thing in its profoundest being, how could it be so in its activity?)

The word being, therefore, does not mean exactly the same when applied to the ego and to a thing. Subject and thing differ in the mode of their existing (*in ratione essendi*). In the propositions "I am" and "That is," the verb undergoes a shift in value; it is colored by its subject. For the same reason, I cannot affirm being univocally of myself and of others. For each subject the verb in the "I am" has an incommensurable value. To attribute existence to them in a univocal sense would be to

neglect this originality which forms one with their existence, which is their very existence; for to exist, both for myself and for others, is to be an *I*. A perfect knowledge, one which would match with complete fidelity the consciousness that each subject has of himself, would see the being in each one as differentiated from within.

Our analysis of the idea of being can be pushed still further. Further reflection would show—that the affirmation of myself-in-the-world is not the adequate equivalent of myself-within-being. The being posited in the latter, more basic affirmation transcends that of the universe and of society. Only an infinite and absolute reality can exhaust its virtualities. The affirmation of being without qualification, included in every existential affirmation, thus opens out, at a deeper level of reflexive analysis, onto the affirmation of Being, the affirmation of God. (It is without doubt the dim perception of this truth which was responsible, a century ago, for the success of ontologism. Its error was to mistake for a vision, even obscure, what was only an implicit affirmation, or, better still perhaps, a transcendental condition of every affirmation. Today, when the controversies have died down and the problems been more carefully sifted out, we can afford to be more equitable in our estimate: "It dared too much, but it was noble in its excess.")

It is evident that the term being as used in the last named affirmation involves yet another shift in meaning. The Being in relation to which both subject and object are affirmed cannot exist in the same way as they do. In reality, if subject and object are included within being, God is beyond it. It is only from an incomplete and provisional point of view that God can be regarded as an "inferior" of being. We

know that there is nothing superior to Him. The idea of being appears rather as a kind of perspective on the order of finite beings. It is turned entirely towards them, and designates God only indirectly, as the mysterious source from whence they emanate. It has God behind it, so to speak.

My self, other selves, things, the Absolute—all these appear as so many different types of being which have been revealed to us by the analysis of the idea of being, and so many diverse affirmations into which the basic affirmation unfolds as it passes to full explicitness. Still other types could be brought out without difficulty, and this could serve as a basis for a truly rational theory of categories. But what has so far been said is enough to show that the idea of being is far from enjoying a perfect unity; rather it is pregnant with a prodigious diversity. Its unity was due only, it seems, to its extreme indistinctness. A fully distinct idea of being would involve nothing less than the exhaustive knowledge of all beings in their unity as well as in their distinction, a knowledge in which the most minute details, the most individual particularities, and the most intimate secrets would be exposed in full light and grasped in a single look. Now such an adequate and concrete idea of being does indeed exist. But it is the Word of God. And all the progress of human thought tends but to one goal: to imitate in the least imperfect way possible this inaccessible ideal.

A SERIOUS DIFFICULTY must be faced at this point. Does not the above analysis end up by doing away with all metaphysical knowledge? If the affirmation of being splits open, on reflection, into a multiplicity of affirmations, is not the idea of being, in the last analysis, nothing but a sheaf of disparate ideas

linked together extrinsically by a word? If that is so, then there can be no more talk of ontology. In all rigor we have no right to advance beyond the phenomenological description of particular existents.⁷

As a first step towards an answer we can point out that, if the affirmation of being were nothing but the indistinctly perceived assemblage of totally disparate affirmations, the indistinctness itself would have no explanation. For it is brought about by an effacing of the differential elements in favor of some common element. Are we to say that the common element present is something purely subjective, namely, the similarity, if not the identity, of the affirming attitude itself? But is this similitude even conceivable if the being affirmed is totally diverse? In reality, unless we are to reduce our thought to a mere juxtaposition of heterogeneous cognitive faculties—which would go against all the evidence—we must maintain that the idea of being possesses not merely the unity of a collection, that is, a logical unity posterior to the plurality of its elements, but a unity which in some way precedes this diversity and endures beyond it. In other words, the affirmation of subject, of object, etc., unfolds within the radical affirmation, "There is..." And the being thus primarily affirmed is not a whole of which the subject, other subjects, things, etc., are parts. Being is prior to beings by the privilege of an unconditional necessity which renders its negation simply unthinkable. Far from thinking being against a background of nothingness, as is sometimes imagined, it is rather nothingness which we think—insofar as it can be thought—against a background of being. Being is there first, and it is within its bosom that beings appear. When a rose is born, it is not existence which comes to it; it is rather the rose which

comes to existence. Being is there, enveloping beings, penetrating them through and through, linking them together, coinciding with what is most intimate in each one, and yet always stretching beyond...

Thus the affirmation of being appears to us as animated, like the Stoic *pneuma*, by a double movement, one from the center towards the periphery and the other from the periphery towards the center. The unity of being, as it becomes more distinct and explicit, orients us towards the multiplicity of beings; but this multiplicity, no matter how real it may be or how sharp the differences and oppositions which emerge within it, can never break out of the enveloping unity, and points back towards it in turn. The idea of being implies, accordingly, a tension between the one and the many. But it is the one which is primary.

It should further be noted that the diverse meanings of the word being are not linked together solely by their common roots in the basic affirmation. Or, at least, the unity which results from the latter does not remain extrinsic to them. There is between one being and another, between one type of being and another, an intrinsic similarity of structure in the midst of their very opposition. Let us examine in particular the case of the ego and of the thing.

It should be noted, first of all, that the ego cannot eliminate all objective aspects. I exist for myself, but in large measure, I exist also for others. They can see me, hear me, touch me, etc., and even with regard to what escapes them in this way I can communicate to them by language a knowledge which already extends quite far. Furthermore, I do not gain full self-assurance except through the opinion which others have of me. The Traditionalists noted this point well. In order to *be* truly in our

own eyes, we need to know that we are accepted and supported by our equals. Our reason would be in grave danger if everything around us proclaimed our non-existence. And yet the knowledge of others reaches us only from without. There remains always the inner fortress of our inviolable intimacy, where we could, strictly speaking, hold out alone against everyone. But this very intimacy would volatilize into illusion and non-being if it were not laid hold of and, as it were, authenticated by absolute Thought—if, therefore, I were not myself in some way an *object* for this Thought, even though, of course, it would not know me according to the mode of an object.

Even without appealing to absolute Thought we would have to maintain that subjectivity can never divest itself of all objective traits. I can never speak out all that is in me; but, no matter how hidden are the depths into which I plunge within myself, I can always say something about them. It is impossible to isolate within myself a zone of pure subjectivity. The very fact of isolating it would suffice to turn it into an object. Subjectivity is present to us only as a kind of impalpable atmosphere enveloping objectified being.

On the other hand, the object is, by definition, that which is *opposed* to me. Now it cannot oppose itself to me unless it first in some manner asserts itself. In other words, it fulfills its function only through the mediation of an act by which it inserts itself into being. This is equivalent to saying that the object is, on its part, also to some degree a subject. I can think it only by analogy with myself, as a kind of *counter-subject*. Etymology itself suggests this. If *objectum* evokes rather the passivity of a thing *thrown against me*, the German term *Gegenstand* indicates clearly, on the contrary, an effort, a tension of the

being which stands up opposite me. To stand up (*stare*, *'istanai*, *stehen*) asserts assuredly something else than a mere passive state. To think the object as existing in itself—and we must do this, under pain of taking away its very objectivity and turning it into a simple immanent correlative of the subject—means, therefore, to confer upon it a minimum of subjective depth: i.e., the exercise of that act which inscribes in the order of existence. Thus every being, in its own way, is a subject: every being is a self-assertion, a self-affirmation. M. Sartre is unwilling to allow that what is only “in-itself” (and not “for-itself”) be said to affirm itself; it just simply is, that's all.⁸ But is not *to be* precisely *to affirm oneself*? Or rather, what else is the affirmation and the act of the will save the reiteration by the spirit, in its own proper way, of the act by which the being *is*? Metaphysically speaking, both affirmation and act of will must be interpreted on the basis of the act of existence. But it is only through them, and hence by turning back to my own subjectivity, that this act reveals itself and allows me to grasp its true character.

If, therefore, at a previous stage of our analysis and on a still somewhat superficial level, subject and object appeared to us as two forms of being that were completely disparate, a deeper analysis has uncovered a close link between them. It is impossible to think the one without conferring upon it to a greater or less degree the intelligible structure of the other.⁹ A subject which would be nothing but subject and an object which would be nothing but object would both dissolve into illusion and non-being. The reason is that being, of which subject and object are both aspects, transcends their opposition and expresses itself in its completeness neither according to the mode of

interiority nor according to that of objective community. Being—every being—is at the same time, though unequally, incommunicable and self-communicative. It follows that metaphysics, no matter how “objective,” must always include a reflection on the subject, and hence can never leave the latter totally outside of its scope. By the return to existing, shown to be necessary in order to give meaning to the word being, I have already grasped at their root all the values of subjectivity.

A DIFFICULTY arises here. Are we not guilty of spreading confusion rather than clarification by what we have just said? Can existence in the Thomistic understanding of the word, that is, the act of being, be identified at all with subjectivity? Is it not, on the contrary, according to the profound remark of the Angelic Doctor, that which somehow is the bond of union of all beings, the very foundation of their community?¹⁰ And would not subjectivity have to be looked for rather on the side of essence, the principle of limitation and particularization? It is immediately evident that such a position would be just the reverse of that held by our contemporaries. For them it is existing which constitutes within each being the principle of irreducible interiority, or, rather, which is this very interiority itself; whereas it is essence, on the contrary, which founds communicability and objectivity. Must we conclude to a definitive opposition between these two positions? Or is not the contrast between them due rather to a hardening of concepts?

It is quite true that *esse* (the act of existing) is for Thomism the principle of similitude and community between beings. But it is not so in the manner of a universal. Existence is not a supremely abstract essence. It is, on the

contrary, that in a being which resists being abstracted, conceptualized, objectified. It cannot be grasped, as we have seen, save by a reflexive return to the act which affirms it, and, in the last analysis, to that radical affirmation which underlies all the activity of the mind and is inseparable from the ego. The act of existence presents itself always as a subjectivity which I can think of only in terms of my own subjectivity. It is a principle of communion, yes, but at the same time a principle of uniqueness. It is the act by which each being affirms itself in its incommunicable singularity, but affirms itself *within being*, as *sharing in being*, as linked in its very singularity with all other singulars.

Such is the deeper meaning of the thesis which sees in the act of existence the formal principle by which an *individual nature* become a *concrete subject*, incommunicable once and for all (a *supposit*). The theological origin of this thesis is evident. But history has already shown us many times how strictly theological speculations lead to important progress on the plane of pure philosophy. The progress in this case consists in bringing out into the open the supremely *individualizing* role of the act of existing.

Let us make ourselves clear on this point. The act of existing, as such, cannot play the role of individuating principle. Though limited and distinguished *in itself*—for it is in itself a relation to essence—it is not so *by itself*—since it is from the side of essence that its limitation proceeds. But it is precisely by it that a being *is* and posits itself as an *absolute*, a concrete totality that is henceforth incapable of entering as an element into the structure of another subject. The act of existing imitates, on the level of the creature, that self-sufficiency, that completeness, that exclusiveness, which are proper to the subsisting

Act of Existence. In the abyss of its irreplaceable subjectivity each "only one" imitates Him who admits no peer.

Yet it is in this same abyss that it meets all other singulars. For this absolute subjectivity in which mine participates is also that in which all other subjects participate. And the more each one strives to be itself and to advance towards perfect authenticity, the more also it enters into profound communion with all the others, since it is the same Act which is acting in all and communicating itself to all. It is not, therefore, by some illusory renunciation of being oneself that we bring about the meeting with another, but in a deepening of one's own self. Nevertheless we must distinguish here between simple individuality, which belongs to the order of nature or essence, and "ipseity" or selfhood, which belongs to the order of act, of existing, while at the same time being conditioned by the former. To cling stubbornly to the former is to imprison oneself in one's poverty. To descend more deeply into the latter is to make oneself ever more open to others. One becomes truly himself not by cultivating originality for its own sake but by existing more intensely, that is, by committing one's life to higher and higher values. This must not be understood as the effacing of my ego before some impersonal ideal. It involves, on the contrary, an eminently personal adhesion to the source of all personality. I root myself more firmly in existence in the measure in which I turn towards God, so that I find my proper place under His eye. But this divine look which consolidates my being is also that which permits me to see others as true beings, as *subjects*. Essential as is the presence of others for us, nothing is more difficult for us to admit than that they really and truly *exist*. I learn to go out of myself, to love others with a

sincerely disinterested love, only when I see in them the image of God, posited in being by the same Good Will.

Thus the deepening in subjectivity, the becoming conscious of what makes us ourselves, far from closing us in and isolating us, is, on the contrary, the condition without which our relations with others would never go beyond the stage of an objective and superficial community. The reason, once again, is that the act of existing is at one and the same time the principle both of incommunicability and of communion.

Inversely, essence—we are speaking here evidently of the *singular* essence—at the same time that it limits being to this particular being and so distinguishes it from all others, presents itself to us, basically, as *that which, within a being, can be communicated*: "Every form, precisely as form, is communicable" (St. Thomas, *In I Sent.*, d. 4, q. 1, a. 1). Even a pure form, which, according to St. Thomas, is not multipliable according to its "natural" being, can be multiplied and communicated according to its "intentional" being. "Michaelity" subsists only in Michael; but it can be present in the order of ideas to an infinity of minds. There is indeed a difference in the mode of being. Michaelity in Michael is the law of the *act of existing*; in Gabriel, in Raphael, etc., it is the law of the *act of thinking*. But in the formal line of quiddity the identity is absolute. And it needs must be; otherwise it would not be Michael that Gabriel and Raphael would know (cf. the celebrated passage of Kant on the hundred thalers in his pocket and in his idea). In short, the essence is representable, objectifiable, and thus communicable, precisely because it is of itself impersonal and becomes a person only by the incommunicable act of existence.

Perhaps, rather than distinguish com-

municability and incommunicability, it would be better to distinguish two kinds of communication. There is the communication of which we have just spoken, that of essence or of form, which is susceptible of being represented. And there is another, quite different, which is proper to act, to existing. (We are here taking the term act in the very strict and formal sense of terminal act, which excludes from its own proper line all potentiality. In a wiser sense form and essence are also acts.) As St. Thomas puts it: "It is of the nature of every act to communicate itself" (*De Pot.*, q. 2, a. 1). We would not go so far as to affirm that the opposition between the passive form, "communicable," in the text cited further back, and the active form, "to communicate itself," in the text just cited, was intentional on the part of St. Thomas. But it is at least suggestive.

In the communication of which we are now speaking it is not a question of a form which is repeated, either identically or imperfectly, according to its intelligible structure, but of an act, of an existence which calls up another existence, of a subject which posits opposite itself another subject. The Absolute does not communicate itself after the manner of a model, of which the various finite beings would be a more or less faithful reproduction, or after the manner of a musical theme, which would be repeated more or less diminished in intensity. At least that is only a partial and secondary point of view. If we wished to find an apt comparison, we should look rather to the order of love and will. Love directs itself towards the other according to the latter's own proper existence; it takes up on its own account and prolongs within itself the act by which the other inserts itself in the order of existence. Let us now suppose a love which would not

be a spiritual participation in the existence of another, but of which this existence would rather be the expression. This is what we mean by that communication of act, raised to its highest degree, which is *Creation*. (At least this is the highest degree which is rationally accessible to us. The mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation present us with incomparably higher forms of communication which the mind of man, left to itself, would never have been able to suspect.)

The deepest relationship between beings and God is not one of resemblance or of difference (for all that is of the order of essence, and it is the act of existing which is central in any being; it is this which is the formal term of the creative act). It is rather an "existential" relationship, and therefore one that is strictly speaking impossible to define. One can do no more than evoke it by suggestion, as that act by which beings are both made present and present themselves before God, and thus at once are distinguished from Him and turn towards Him, adhering to Him as to the Source on which they depend. This relationship, once grasped by the spiritual subject, can follow out two divergent paths within him, that of love or of hate, that of confident adoration or of rebellious pride.

What is more, if the divine Act communicates itself by calling forth other acts into existence in its presence, then without doubt the latter must preexist within it in some manner. But it would not be adequate to conceive this in terms of the preexistence of the image in the model. For the model contains the image only insofar as the latter resembles it, whereas the divine Act, as the total cause of creatures, must contain them according to all that they are, hence according to their very subjectivity, i.e., according to the very aspect

which opposes them irreducibly to Himself. What else can this mean save that they are present to Him in the only manner in which it is possible for another, as other, to be present, namely according to the mode of thought and of love? This does not mean by a love somehow added on to the divine Being, but by a love which is this very Being itself; for, if there were any distinction between Love and Being, it would be necessary to put first of all into the latter all that had to be present in the former. The absolute Act of Existing, precisely because it precontains within itself all other acts of existence according to all their subjective depth, cannot be conceived save as an absolute Love. "God is Love." The metaphysics of existence thus rejoins in its own way the spiritual intuition of the apostle of love.

LET US NOW gather together the results of our reflections. We have seen how the affirmation of being, since it includes within itself the affirmation of both subject and object, cannot unfold and clarify itself without a reflection upon the subject. We have seen how the object itself, in order to be solidly real, in order to assure its own objectivity, implies a kind of analogous subjectivity that I can know only by reference to my own. And we have shown how the opposition of objectivity-subjectivity is founded on the opposition of essence-existence; for subjectivity in the strictest sense of the word, as belonging to a *subject* properly so called, is nothing else but the expression within consciousness of the act of existing, insofar as the latter impresses on a being the seal of inalienable individuality.

This is the moment to remind the reader once and for all that Thomism is not desiccated philosophy of es-

sences, but that it is on the contrary pointed entirely towards existence, towards *esse*. If the word "existentialism" did not exist, it would have to be invented to characterize adequately Thomistic thought. We shall not employ it, however, precisely because it does exist and now carries a very special meaning. No, Thomism is not an existentialism. But it is *par excellence* the metaphysics of existence. Through the medium of all the concepts that inevitably it has to manipulate—and what else can a human science do?—it is the act of existing that it is aiming at, in the inexhaustible richness of all its virtualities (*virtus essendi*). But the act of existing is immediately given in the depths of our subjective life; we meet it in the sanctuary where we work out our destiny. It is in the guise of the ego that existence reveals itself to us. Hence a metaphysics of existence worthy of the name cannot get started without a plunge into the depths of subjectivity. And this plunge is necessary not only at the beginning. Metaphysics is in danger of degenerating into verbalism if it is not constantly revived by contact with existence. Unceasingly must we recharge our concepts with this savor of being, which the play of abstract thought causes to evaporate so quickly.

Far from requiring, therefore, like scientific thought, the self-effacement of the ego before the universal, the objective, and the impersonal, metaphysical thought demands a subjective deepening pushed all the way to the point where the ego finds itself opening out into communion with others. Every solution of the one and the many will be artificial which does not refer back in the last analysis to this primary fact.

By means of such a deepening, Thomistic metaphysics will be able to escape the reproach from which we started, namely, that it is valid only for the

world of objects. It is not an adequate answer to the difficulty to point out that the subject is also object. It is, without doubt, but not in its totality; for it resists complete conceptualization. If that is true, is it not to be feared that in its subjective depths it will escape the laws of objective thought? The danger is removed if the idea of being, the starting point of metaphysics, necessarily includes an act of reflection, and on the condition, of course, that this perspective does not disappear from view thereafter. By the same means metaphysics will be protected against many of the distortions and inadequacies which are an inevitable consequence of a reified (*chosiste*) interpretation of spiritual being. I am thinking, in particular, of the problem of liberty.

This integration into its philosophy of the domain of subjectivity in all its peculiar depth and mystery seems to us to be one of the most urgent tasks which confronts Thomism today. It is not possible that the cultivation of this intensified awareness of existence in its incommunicable originality should not produce repercussions on our idea of being in the direction of bringing out certain traits which have heretofore remained in obscurity. On the other hand, such a method of reflection and deeper penetration will make it possible for the notions and principles of metaphysics to receive a more adequate expression. If the system of act and potency and the principles of sufficient reason or of causality meet with so much opposition and arouse so much repugnance among our contemporaries, is not one reason because they have been thought out too exclusively in terms of schemas based solely on objects as such?

This adaptation by no means involves, it should go without saying, the setting up of an exterior and artificial concordance between Thomism and cer-

tain present-day currents of thought, nor a mere dressing up of the traditional doctrine to bring it into conformity with the latest mode of the day, nor even the attempt to discover what St. Thomas *would have said* if confronted with our problems. We have but little taste for all such futuribles. It is we who have to answer these problems, and on our own responsibility. But it seems to us that Thomism, if we have not merely learned it superficially but penetrated into it deeply, assimilated it personally and made it part of our own substance, can be of marvelous assistance in working out adequate solutions. It is our belief that by building upon it and in continuity with its new developments and new integrations are possible under the stimulus of the new problems brought up by modern thought. It is the characteristic of every great doctrine that it transcends the explicit intention of its author. Every work of genius is the bearer of seminal ideas. It has perhaps been reserved for our time to exploit to the full the resources of the Thomistic doctrine of existence.

translated by W. NORRIS CLARKE, S.J.

NOTES

¹ Many nuances would have to be introduced here. Thus the ego of Descartes is "something which thinks," but it is also "something which doubts, which conceives, which affirms, which denies, which wills, which refuses, which imagines also and senses" (*Deuxième Méditation*, ed. Adam-Tannery, IX, 22).

² Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, (Princeton Univ. Press, 1944), pp. 182-83.

³ "Primo autem in conceptione intellectus cadit ens" (*Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 5, a. 2); "Illud autem quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum et in quo omnes conceptiones resolvit est ens" (*De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 1).

⁴ See on this point the excellent pages of Jacques Maritain in *Existence and the Existent* (New York, 1948), pp. 15-35.

⁵ See, for example, J. Laporte, *La conscience de la liberté* (Paris, 1947), pp. 178-80.

⁶ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 84, a. 7. It would be appropriate to point out also, in addition to the proper object, what we might call the center of reference of our knowledge (the *analogatum princeps quoad nos* of the Scholastics), that is, the type of being considered as the one most immediately known and in function of which all others are conceived. This center varies according to the mentality in vogue and the degree of penetration into the depths of subjectivity. For antiquity and Scholasticism, at least for peripatetic Scholasticism, being was conceived of on the model of the *sensible thing*, and not without a certain danger of overobjectification, which St. Thomas avoids thanks only to his exceptional vigor of metaphysical thought. The modern epoch, following certain suggestions of St. Augustine, takes the subject as the typical instance of being: the thinking subject with Descartes; the moral subject with Fichte; the subject as existing, as concrete and singular human reality, involved in conflict, in care and in anguish, in the case of contemporary Existentialism. Others, finally, prefer to consider Society as the fundamental reality (Comte, Marx, Durkheim). On this whole subject see the interesting article of D. H. Salmon, "La multiplicité de l'être," *Revue des sciences phil. et théol.*, 32 (1947), 173-91. It goes without saying that the judicious choice of this center of reference is not without effect on the exact determination of the proper object of the intellect.

⁷ Right here, it is well known, lies one of the great difficulties of existentialist philosophy. M. De Waelhens writes very aptly, à propos of K. Jaspers: "We must recognize that a philosophy, no matter how respectful of existence it may be, cannot help but presuppose a certain general structure of existence by the very fact that it speaks about existence and tries to elucidate it. It may indeed speak ill of it, but it is obliged to suppose it, for all my words are meaningless if I do not admit that a certain structure of existence is common to my interlocutor and myself. Hence this philosophy is forced to admit a thesis directly contrary to its own affirmations. Despite its formal intent, the philosophy of Jaspers cannot restrict itself to being purely existential" (*La philosophie de Martin Heidegger*, Louvain, p. 301).

⁸ J. P. Sartre, *L'être et le néant*, Paris, pp. 31-34.

⁹ This is what Descartes pointed out a propos of matter and spirit (see, for example, *Lettre à ****, Aout, 1641, ed. Adam-Tannery, III, 423-25). But he attributed to the primitive confusion of our thoughts what really belongs to the structure of being itself.

¹⁰ "Res ad invicem non distinguuntur secundum quod esse habent, quia in hoc omnia conveniunt" (*C. Gent.*, I, c. 26).

Notes on other Publications

THE POLITICAL-CULTURAL SCENE

1.

The Historian and Character (Cambridge). The publication of the inaugural lecture of David Knowles as Regius Professor of History at Cambridge is of prime importance for its modification of the inaugural lecture ("On the Study of History") of his great predecessor, Lord Acton. Such a reply has been needed, as against the tendency to hold up Acton, the moral judge, as the prototype of "true" Catholic historical scholarship. In his inaugural Acton had said (*italics added*):

History compels us to fasten on abiding issues, and rescues us from the temporary and the transient. Politics and history are interwoven, but are not commensurate. Ours is a domain that reaches further than affairs of state, and is not subject to the jurisdiction of governments. *It is our function to keep in view and to command the movement of ideas, which are not the effect but the cause of public events*; and even to allow some priority to ecclesiastical history over civil, ... by reason of the graver issues concerned, and the vital consequences of error ...

He portrayed the duty of the historian in no uncertain terms:

I exhort you never to debase the moral currency or to lower the standard of rectitude, but to try others by the final maxim that governs your own lives, and *to suffer no man and no cause to escape the undying penalty which history has the power to inflict on wrong* ... If we lower our standard in history we cannot uphold it in Church or State.

Something might be said to show that ideas are to be understood *also* as devices whereby men try to cope, as ra-

tional beings, with concrete situations, and that very often historians, when undertaking the role of judges, are in the position of condemning medieval serfs for not plowing with tractors. Ideas and concepts are often merely inadequate. Moreover, they "grow," or are transformed in use.

Knowles' reply goes to the heart of the matter and focuses upon "judgment" on the person:

There is, indeed, a truth far too often ignored by historians, which loosens many problems. A man's character, above all when the man is of no common mould, cannot be analyzed by picking up an action of a characteristic here and there and tying them in a bunch. No one passes through time and its accidents and remains unchanged. A man has free will and he can, indeed he must, exercise it. His nature with its characteristics remains recognizable, as do his features, but his aims, his ideals, his sense of values, and his directive strength of will may have changed entirely ... The historian must recognize this, even if it seems to complicate his task.

Knowles' corrective would appear to be contained further along in his short essay:

A life is not a bundle of acts; it is a stream or a landscape; it is the manifestation of a single mind and of a personality that may grow more deformed or more beautiful to the end ... The whole concept of the historian as a judge in a trial is radically false, if only because a judge by his very office acquits, he does not praise and reward ... He watches the stream of events and the actions of men, and records them as best he may ... The historian is not trying the men and women of the past, he is *contemplating* them; he has to see them as in truth they were and to

present them as such to others, and a man, as a man, cannot be truly seen unless his moral worth, his loveworthiness, is seen.

This emphasis on contemplation might aid in a reorientation in historical thought, and its Christian humility is given point by the interlinear quotation on the cover of the published text—"Quid est homo quod memor es ejus? Minuisti eum paulo minus ab angelis." Against Acton, may we not even say that it is rather the historian and those of "his own time" who are *on trial*?

2.

Communism and Christianity. Penguin Books has happily made available to a wide audience a book of Father D'Arcy, S. J., with this title, from which a good understanding of ultimate grounds of opposition can be obtained. Nevertheless, there remain the practical questions as to how to deal with Communism, as we are reminded again in this issue by the articles on "The Church of Silence." A report by Graham Greene on his visit to Poland appeared in the February ATLANTIC MONTHLY, and Hugh Delargy, M.P., contributed a two-part article (February-March) on Polish Catholics in BLACKFRIARS.

On a different level of discussion is the brief note, "They know not what they do," by T. E. Butler (THE MONTH, November 1955), which pretends to expose the "pro-Soviet" attitudes of many French Catholic intellectuals, both clerical and lay. It is indeed regrettable that the hysterics of Jean Madrian (whose book, *Il ne savent pas ce qu'ils font*, occasioned Butler's comments) are given an apparent respectability by being echoed in THE MONTH. THE MONTH usually is able to suggest a rather respectable conservative tone without "descending" to political dis-

cussion, or even deigning to run informative articles on social or political problems. But now it takes to hurling epithets and suggesting bad faith: "The voice of the Holy See seems to mean little or nothing to those twentieth-century Gallicans"—this apparently covers Mauriac, ESPRIT, LA VIE INTELLECTUELLE, TÉMOIGNAGE CHRÉTIEN. Nor is confidence in THE MONTH's incursion into politics increased by its editorial introduction to its next (December) number, in which the anti-Israel chorus now rampant in certain sections of the popular Catholic press receives a rather uncritical extension.

3.

"Moral and Spiritual Values" (continued). The "guiding statement" of the Board of Superintendents of the New York City schools, explaining how and why teachers should inculcate "moral and spiritual values," continues to provide material for discussion. A high-level journalistic account of the situation was provided by William Lee Miller in THE REPORTER (March 22, 1956). As a Protestant with a serious theological commitment, he was distrustful of the "common core" notion of religion, and challenged the assumption that morality and "Americanism" depend on this lowest-common-denominator religion. He also attempted to call attention to dangers inherent in this program from a Catholic point of view:

The problems of reducing a deep and determinant faith to a public-school religion are acute with all denominations, and particularly with the Roman Catholics. On the basis of their understanding that some basic truths are available to the neutral reason of every man, unaided by revelation, they may suggest that some of these—God and the natural law, for example—be taught in the general schools. But in a non-Catholic American en-

vironment, with all its pressures toward what a Catholic would call "indifferentism," the teaching of these "common beliefs" soon would certainly imply to many students a shoulder-shrugging conclusion that one religion that contained those basic beliefs was quite as good as another. These common beliefs, taught to everybody in the schools, would tend to become the important ones, and the particular doctrinal or institutional forms in which they were embodied would become, by implication, secondary. When the teaching moved ever so slightly toward that conclusion, the Roman Catholics would be the first and most emphatic to withdraw support of the program.

4.

The Last Hurrah (Little Brown). It is fitting that in this election year we should be deluged with novels, partisan studies and hagiographical biographies centered on our seasonal passion—politics. Few of this rigidly supported current crop deserve the acclaim given Edwin O'Connor's *The Last Hurrah*, a well-written humorous account—as well as a literate sociological document—of a Boston-like city, run by second-generation Irish politicians. Basically, the novel centers on injustice of the ghettos that were imposed on new immigrants by the old natives; it is because of this that the account has more of a tone of nostalgia than that of moral indignation.

The action of the novel deals with the last mayoralty campaign of the old-style boss of the city, Frank Skeffington. He is aware that his breed is dying, that the political world which gave him life is rapidly coming to a close. But before he himself passes from this world he decides that he must act the part of a cicerone—perhaps even make this world seem a little cleaner to the eyes of the new people. The traveling-companion

whom he leads through his dark and obscure wood is his aptly-named nephew, Adam.

The people who come into contact with Skeffington are poetically consistent: Amos Force, who cannot forget that Skeffington's mother was fired by his father for stealing food; Norman Cass, the banker, blocked by Skeffington from exploiting the poor; the Cardinal, who despised Skeffington because he "cheapened us forever at a time when we could have gained stature: I can never forgive him for that!" The mayor's opponents share none of his color. Their campaign is weak, unobtrusive, yet strangely ominous. With the close of the election comes the last sad hurrah.

Perhaps the highlight of the novel is a fabled Irish wake, which Adam learns is itself involved in the campaign. At first he is appalled at the vulgarity of the affair, but is ultimately moved to question whether a later generation's offended sense of propriety really arose out of a deeper moral or human concern.

The election is an upset: Skeffington is snowed under by a simpleton whose highly effective television technique and mannerisms may suggest national parallels. With his world crumbling, it is proper that Skeffington die shortly after. Many suggestions are offered as to the cause of the defeat, not least of which is the economic emancipation of the immigrants effected by the New Deal. This is a matter of something more than economics, the federal government making personal loyalties to a local boss largely irrelevant. The recent immigrant of new-found status rejected the idea of dependency, his interests became more those of the giver than of the receiver; his over-all attitude became that of the middle-class. Since he had "arrived," he resented the "foreign" aspects of his background, and strove to be respect-

ably absorbed within a properly anonymous Americanism.

O'Connor's picture is far from complete: there is a group between Skeffington's world and that of his adversaries. Since the voice that catalogues Skeffington's evils is weak, the reader receives an over-simplification in an understanding of the conflict of Skeffington vs. Amos Force, Norman Cass, etc. For O'Connor, apparently the pleasant memories are still fresh; as a colorful figure, it is the evil that is interred with Skeffington's bones, and the good that lives long after him.

5.

THE REVIEW OF POLITICS. The October 1955 issue of this distinguished quarterly published two articles either of which alone is worthy of much consideration but taken together, since they focus upon some of the prime socio-philosophical problems of our time, may well be matter for extensive academic discussion, dissent and evocative analysis: Hans J. Morgenthau's "Reflections on the State of Political Science" and Raymond P. Stearns' "A Plea for Political History."

Morgenthau takes under consideration the passing of political theory which, upon the breakdown of faith in the great philosophical systems, seemed destined, at first, to become their successor. Just as in many colleges philosophy has been relegated to the status of a special course or two in the field of the humanities so political theory has been reduced to minor place in that omniscient "neo-scholasticism"—the social sciences. He charges, in effect, that the political scientists, and especially the theorists, have abdicated their responsibilities—that the very last thing they wish to talk about, honestly, is the *present situation*. "History and methodology, in particular, become the protective

armor which shields political science from contact with the reality of the contemporary world." He specifically charges that political scientists have not dared risk academic unpopularity by recognizing that "the distinctive, unifying element of politics is the struggle for power, elemental, undisguised, and all pervading." And least of all that it is true of the realm of economics, the very substance of modern politics.

We may have reservations about his thesis concerning the struggle for power, so much like Oswald Spengler's dogmatic assertion that "man is a beast of prey" or Erik von Kuenhelt-Ledihn's virtually equivalent reading of the doctrine of original sin (*Liberty or Equality*) but we may well second his plea for moral courage. "What political science needs," he asserts, "is restoration of the intellectual and moral commitment to the truth about matters political for its own sake."

Professor Stearns, in his somewhat gentler approach, begins with the paradox that, in spite of the advent of the omniscient and omnipresent "state," political history has virtually vanished from the contemporary academic curriculum. He stresses the fact that, in part, this is because historians and political scientists have no solid philosophical foundations from which to develop historical perspective. In part this was due to specialization but largely to the development of positivism. Then he goes on to suggest that, since there is now a slow recovery of philosophical footing, the way to a recovery of perspective lies in the perception that "politics is central in the life of man, and [that] the political constitution of the state is a way of life, far more than party structure and governmental machinery. Is not such a broadly interpreted *political* approach to history a practical, a realistic, and even a timely principle upon

which to integrate the history of man?"

Here is sound perception of the fact that politics is the external manifestation of man's moral nature. Indeed Edmund Burke might well have penned Stearns' conclusion. "Political science has gone heavily functional, with little time or concern for the historical background and development of current governmental institutions... And in proportion to the extent to which these conditions prevail, democracy is endangered."

Also noted. Roland Hill reviewed Lord Acton's career in Catholic journalism in the December *BLACKFRIARS*, making it the occasion to emphasize "the importance of public opinion inside the Church and the impossibility of separating that public opinion from the mass of the faithful, the laity."... The January *CONFLUENCE* concluded its symposium on "The Relation of Advanced to Underdeveloped Countries." Besides a long feature article by Brice Parain ("Against the Spirit of Neutrality"), there was F. G. Friedman's "The Impact

of Technically Advanced Civilizations on Underdeveloped Areas," Maurice Duverger's discussion of the example of France, and D. P. Mukerji's analysis of the situation of Indian intellectuals... Father Herbert Musurillo, S.J., made a strong attack on Christopher Dawson's proposals for a college-level study of Christian culture in the Summer 1955 *THOUGHT*. Much of the strength of his remarks came from his greater awareness of the concrete situation of American Catholic colleges, for which he felt the proposals would be both unrealistic and tending to encourage a ghetto mentality... Pantheon has published *Dying We Live*, edited by Helmut Gollwitzer and Reinhold Schneider (introductions by George Shuster and Reinhold Niebuhr), containing letters and notes from martyrs in Nazi Germany to dear ones left behind. The work is to be applauded both for its moving contents, documenting the spiritual resistance to Hitler, and for its example as a product of collaboration between a Protestant pastor and a well-known Catholic poet.

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

I.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Macmillan has now published four works of this German Protestant theologian, whose life was ended by Hitler's hangman in 1945. Bonhoeffer returned to Germany from a lecture tour in America in 1939, and after being banned from preaching and teaching, became active in a resistance movement, which resulted in imprisonment and death.

Prisoner for God (1953)—English title, *Letters and Papers from Prison*—includes a letter in which the author sketches an outline for a short book. Looking ahead to the post-war religious

situation, facing torture and death, he writes with an urgency which at this distance most of us will hardly sense. Perhaps our general somnambulant condition will force us to disagreement when Bonhoeffer writes: "Antiquated controversies, especially those of the different confessions. The Lutheran *versus* the Reformed, and to some extent the Catholic *versus* Protestant controversy. These divisions may at any time be revived with passion, but they no longer carry conviction. Impossible to prove this, but necessary to take the bull by the horns." (179-80)

In addition to *Prisoner for God*, *The Cost of Discipleship*, *Temptation*, *Life*

Together, and a large volume entitled simply *Ethics* (1955) have also been translated. Although the latter is not a completed work, parts of this treatise have been rewritten and finished. The notes and manuscript were retrieved from their garden hiding-places. There will be understandable disagreement with the author in regard to some of his conclusions, but the provocative questions raised indicate a profoundly sensitive grasp of the contemporary scene.

2.

New Series in Theology. Fides has now published two volumes of their projected six-volume translation of the Dominican-edited *Initiation Théologique*; this Catholic *Introduction to Theology* may well prove a landmark in the theological education of the American Catholic laity. Each volume consists of an organized group of essays by different contributors, under the over-all editorship of Fr. A. M. Henry, O.P. The essays are attractively written and reveal a wide general reading on the part of the contributors.

The Christian Faith Series (Double-day) under the editorship of Reinhold Niebuhr, has now published five titles: Alexander Miller's *The Renewal of Man: 20th century essay on justification by faith*; William J. Wolf's *Man's Knowledge of God*; James A. Pike's *Doing the Truth*; E. LaB. Cherbonnier's *Hardness of Heart*; and Daniel Jenkins' *The Strangeness of the Church*. Here is a successful attempt to present the great themes of Christianity and give voice to the new theological currents within 20th century Protestantism in non-technical language aimed at the intelligent layman.

For more advanced readers, the new Macmillan series, the Library of Theol-

ogy and Philosophy, will prove of greater interest. In addition to Bonhoeffer's *Ethics*, other valuable studies have already appeared to fill out the purpose of the general editor to provide "a meeting place for the thought of contemporary theologians and philosophers, Continental and Anglo-Saxon." The interest in Bultmann is apparent, with the publication of his *Essays: philosophical and theological* and John Macquarrie's *An Existentialist Theology*, a study of the former's theology in terms of the conceptual structure borrowed from Heidegger. Bultmann had claimed to find a close affinity between existentialist and biblical thinking, and Dr. Macquarrie has undertaken a thorough and dispassionate analysis of the concepts involved, and the manner in which Bultmann has employed them. The latest title in the series is James Brown's *Subject and Object in Modern Theology*.

An unpretentious Protestant series directed to the layman comes from the Westminster press, consisting of brief inexpensive books that should prove valuable for discussion groups. The first two titles are Robert McAfee Brown's *The Significance of the Church*, and J. Loew's *Modern Rivals to Christian Faith*.

3.

Medical Guide to Vocations (Newman). This is an important book, and one that has long been needed. A translation, from the work of Drs. René Biot and Pierre Gallimard, it is a French Catholic attempt to apply the advances in psychological medicine to the task of choosing suitable candidates for the priesthood and the religious life, and to discuss the chief varieties of mental troubles which may concern a seminarian or religious. This is not a work for the specialist, but its clear presentation, its

documentation and common sense should recommend it to all who are concerned with the selection and guidance of religious. The authors do not attempt to go beyond their competence, and displace the role of the spiritual director, but they are aware of the bad effects of the kind of preaching which insists that every neurosis is a sin, and make their contribution to the necessary work of Catholic scholarship in integrating the work of depth psychology and psychological medicine.

4.

The Christian Experience (Sheed and Ward). Readers of Canon Jean Mouroux's earlier *The Meaning of Man* will need no urging to read this later work, which is a theological, not a psychological analysis. The author criticizes the Protestant (Lutheran) idea of religious experience for trying to reduce it to one particular feeling; he feels it must develop on what he calls the experiential level, which is a personal awareness of self as involved in a network of relationships with one's environment. If this sort of awareness is developed, the authentic religious experience could be understood as a grasping of oneself in relation to God within the religious context established by God, i.e. in Christ and the Church. In his attack on the reduction of the notion of "feeling," Mouroux emphasizes that affectivity also has its place in the function of man's rational appetite. His central insight can be largely understood in the way in which he sees that Christian experience, suspended as it is between "the security that comes from God and the insecurity that comes from us," is no imagined feeling of assured salvation, but "a hope that is both fully confident and at the same time goes in fear and trembling; we are saved by hope."

5.

Religion in Life. The last two issues of this journal maintain its distinguished level of relevant concern for modern Christians. The lead discussion of the Winter issue is on "Where do we go from here in theology?" Nels F. S. Ferre of Vanderbilt, after elbowing aside Fundamentalism, High Church-ism, the "new modernism" of Barthian biblicism, the cultural accommodationism of Liberalism, and the "existentialism" of Tillich (as lacking the "supernatural dimension of Christian experience"), attempted to present his own position as one within which all Christian traditions may meet, in terms heraldic of a neo-dogmatism:

Fortunately I can point without hesitation to a Christian theology with full stress on both objectivity and subjectivity and both within the organic necessity of truth. The Christian Revelation alone can provide the whole truth of life. We need a Christian-centered evangelical supernaturalism, based on Revelation, found only by faith, generating and sustaining freedom, open to reason and using it fully, energized by the Holy Spirit of truth and concern for the individual and for society, made conclusive in Christian community, which lives to the glory of God and finds fulfilment only within his will.

Paul Tillich and Cornelius Van Til defended their respective positions in sharp critical replies. Dr. Alden Drew Kelly, president of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, attempted a "moderating" support of Ferre:

it is doubtful that the unity of Christendom will be achieved in any sense through doctrinal agreement, no matter how ingenious. A theological view is the product of life, not thought alone; it is properly "existential." The new theology will be the effect of a new life together in Christian oneness with each other and with Christ, not its cause.

The four-part discussion in the Spring issue was devoted to the "reality" and "pastoral significance" of "Spiritual Healing." It ranged from the "theology of sickness," the pastoral function of "the laying on of hands," to the career of Kathryn Kuhlman and the records at Lourdes.

Of special interest to CROSS CURRENTS readers might be Edward R. Spann's analysis of Father John Courtney Murray's writings on Church and State. Although this is an attempt at sympathetic understanding, Spann concludes that "the key to Murray's inconsistency lies in his failure to deny the validity of the Spanish system"—it would appear that for Murray to be consistent the Spanish would have to deny their own history. Nevertheless, there is a pointedness to his central challenge: "So long as the Roman Catholic remains loyal to the Pope as the final authority, there can be no Roman defense of religious pluralism." Despite misunderstanding of the Catholic notion of papal infallibility, Spann's article is valuable, and one may hope that it will elicit the responses that may provide for a deeper meeting of minds.

In the same issue Carl Michalson provides an important survey of contemporary thought on the relationship of religion and history; Bishop Dibelius discusses St. Luke as "The First Christian Historian," and Donald A. Lowrie (the associate and translator of Berdyaev) studies Communist morality, as propounded in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia and A. Shiskin's *Basis of Communist Morality*. Some of the quotations which Lowrie abstracts from the latter work are worth quotation in themselves:

Marxist ethics does not prescribe norms, but derives them from the social life of man... Soviet humanism denies the abstract preachment of

"universal love,"... which in a class society is always either a delusion or deliberate hypocrisy... An inseparable part of socialist humanism is hatred of the enemies of the Soviet people, the Socialist Fatherland, or human progress... The communists never for a minute forget their final aim... the radical reconstruction of society.

In short, all law and morality is derived from the order which they, through the revolution, are bringing out of chaos.

There is also an excellent and provocative study of the late Ortega y Gasset by David White, which seeks to defend Ortega from those Protestants who criticised him for not becoming a professed Evangelical Christian:

Both Thomistic and the various forms of Idealistic philosophy holding to the primacy of the intellect have created philosophic systems which rob the historical scene of most of its vitality and decisive importance. Reality is seen ultimately as static rather than dynamic. Even God becomes a part of the system... he fulfills a function determined by the system... The existential philosophy of Ortega y Gasset, which says little about God, actually leaves God free and man open to God's activity. Reality is... open to the future and vital with possibility... Ortega's philosophy of history gives the historical event vital importance. It is not a shadowy "moving image of eternity," but the very essence of life in the making. Both Idealism and Thomism tend to rob the historical event of any decisive significance. As a result they also rob the Incarnation of its decisive importance. They don't exactly know what to do with Christ. Ortega... insures that all history must be taken seriously... keeps man open toward the future, and incidentally open toward God. Life is not a closed affair already determined by... reason. Man is not a *thing*, but a conduct, a drama, a project. The man who seeks to realize a project seeks ends, ultimates, and... the ultimate.

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